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最強無敵の

神機電

ILL  
秋月千里  
SENRI AKATSUKI  
ILL  
春日葵  
ATSUMI KASUGA

# Saijaku Muhai no Bahamut

vol.9

by Akatsuki Senri

Translation Group: [bakapervert](#)





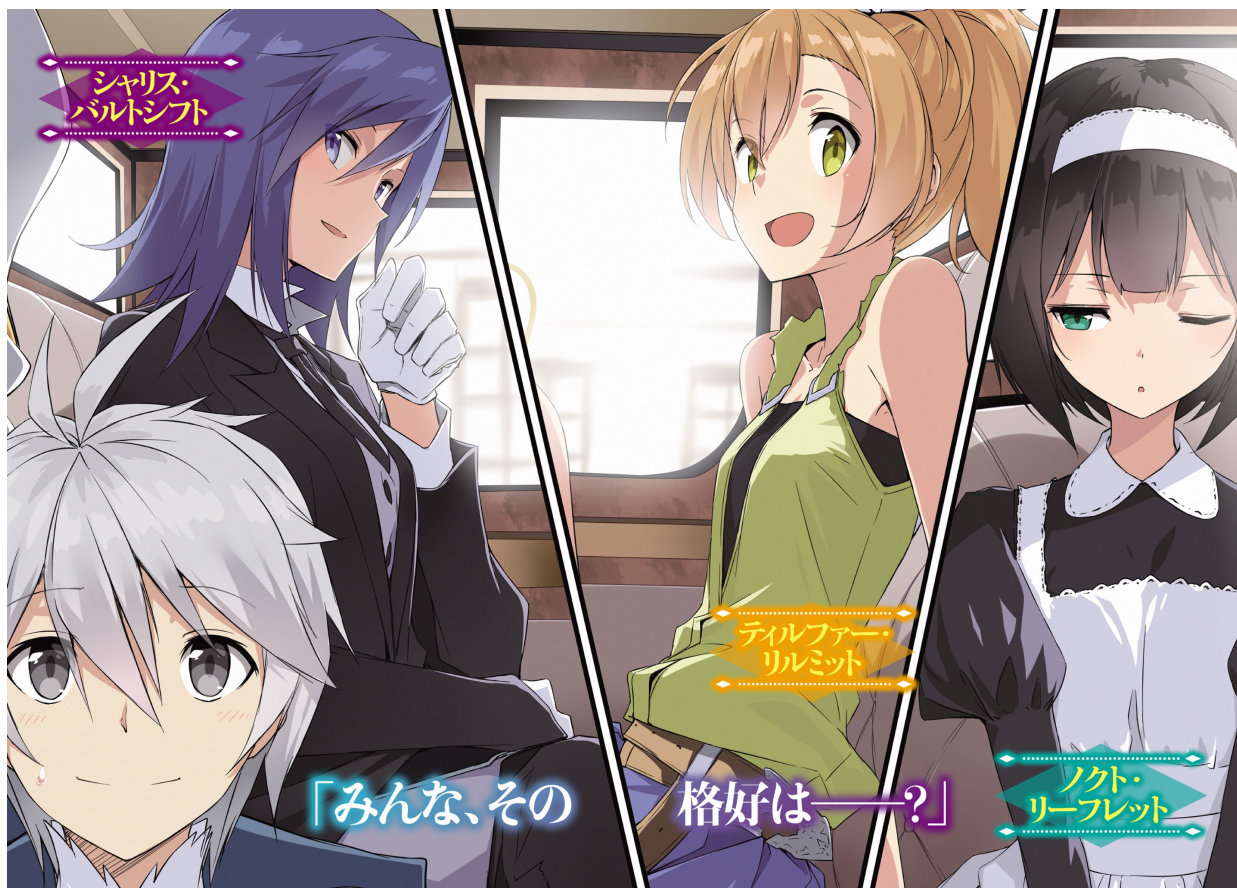






最弱無敗の  
神装機竜

ハム・ト









# Character



## ルクス・アーカディア

滅亡したアーカディア帝国の王子。  
『無敗の最弱』と呼ばれる機電使い。



## リーズシャルテ・アティスマータ

アティスマータ新王国の王女。朱の戦姫と呼ばれる。  
神装機電《ティアマト》の使い手。



## フィルフィ・アイングラム

アイングラム財閥の次女。ルクスの幼馴染みで学園長の妹。  
神装機電《チューポーン》の使い手。



## クルルシファー・エインfolk

北の大国、ユミル教国からの留学生であるクラスメイト。  
神装機電《ファフニール》の使い手。



## アイリ・アーカディア

旧帝国の皇族の生き残り。  
一年生で、ルクスの実の妹。



## セリスティア・ラルグリス

『騎士団』<sup>シヴァレス</sup> 団長、学園最強の三年生。四大貴族の公爵家令嬢で、神装機電《リンドヴルム》の使い手。



## 切姫夜架

『帝国の凶刃』と呼ばれた暗殺者の少女。ルクスを主と認め、仕えている。神装機電《夜刀ノ神》の使い手。



## フギル・アーカディア

旧アーカディア帝国第一皇子。  
《創造主》側の人間として、再びルクスの前に姿を現す。

# World

## 装甲機竜《ドラグライド》

遺跡から発掘された、古代兵器。

その中でも希少種であり、高い性能を持つものは、神装機竜と呼ばれる。

また、装甲機竜の使い手は、機竜使い《ドラグナイト》と呼ばれる。

## 遺跡《ルイン》

世界に七つ発見された古代遺跡。装甲機竜《ドラグライド》が発掘されたため、国力を左右する重要な存在として、各国間で縄張り争いが起きている。

## 幻神獣《アビス》

遺跡から現れる謎の幻獣。人類の脅威であり、機竜使いのみが対抗できる。

## 終焉神獣《ラグナレク》

ひとつの遺跡<sup>ルイン</sup>に対し一匹のみ存在するという、超常の力を秘めた七匹の幻神獣。

## 黒き英雄

正体不明の装甲機竜《ドラグライド》を使い、たった1機で帝国の装甲機竜の約1200機を倒したと言われる伝説の英雄。

## アティスマータ新王国

リーズシャルテの父であるアティスマータ伯が、アーカディア帝国に対して行ったクーデターによって、五年前に建国された国。

## アーカディア旧帝国

世界の五分の一を束ねていた大国。世界最強と謳<sup>うた</sup>われた、圧倒的な軍事力を背景に圧政を敷いていたが、クーデターによって滅ぼされた。  
ルクスとアイリは、この帝国の皇族の生き残り。

## 七竜騎聖

年々高まる幻神獣の脅威に対抗し、世界協定に加盟した各国から選出された、代表の機竜使いたち。

# **Prologue: The Night Before Departure**



## Part 1

This tale—is of the ordinary days of me and the girls.

—

My past, after I was banished from that suffocating imperial court and then living at the outskirts of the imperial capital.

I discovered my mission as an imperial family and tried to accomplish something, yet I failed.

Such me was wishing for a life with friends and comrades, it was really fun.

Right at the beginning it was surprising, but I'm really thankful to Lisha-sama.

For taking me into the Academy.

And everyone too, they are accepting me.

—

This is the daily record of such—irreplaceable days.

These are happening that took place in the Academy within only ten days since an oracle that said this world would end in half a year was told by the Lords.

The place that I once more thought as what I wish to protect even at the cost of my life.

Before departing to a foreign country after this, I will write down a diary for a bit.

In order to be able to definitely come back here safely, in order to be able to accomplish the mission.

—

In order to be able to protect Lisha-sama and the new kingdom all the way—.

—

## Part 2

".....Yosh, I think this should be enough for the travel's preparation."

Late at night in the girl dormitory.

The tallow lamp inside Lux's room was gently illuminating the surrounding.

Luggage was lining up inside the personal room that was finally given to him, crowding the space.

The preparation for the travel after this was already finished.

He was also able to spend time with his little sister and his friends the girls and properly said goodbye to them.

Lux took a breath and sat on the bed, and then he slowly let his body fell on the bed.

He stared at the texture of the ceiling while recalling the memory of these ten days.

Before he was finally falling asleep, he tried reeling in the thread of that warm memory.



# **Chapter 1: Airi Chapter – Love Story At Tea Party In A Certain Day**

## Part 1

"—Is everyone here? Does everyone have tea and snack at hands too? Have you all finished taking a bath and homework properly? .....Is that so. Then, let's begin the tea party tonight."

"Yes-!"

At night of a certain day.

In the dining hall of girl dormitory at Cross Field's Academy.

Inside the place where several lamps are being faintly lit, small cheers are spreading when the girl who acted as the coordinator said that.

"....."

The night tea party that is held once a month between students of the same year is a custom event where most of the students are participating.

Tonight it's the first year students' turn, it seems that this place is reserved for us.

It's a tranquil time where sweet snacks and gentle night wind soothe the heart.

This meeting's main objectives are for information exchange, relaxation from the daily Drag-Ride training, and most importantly—to deepen the friendship between fellow students.

In that space where the girls' friendly conversation are fluttering around and the tea cups are making small sound, I, Airi Arcadia am reading book at the corner.

"What is Airi reading since some time ago there?"

A black haired girl who is addressing me from the side is my classmate, she is my friend, and also my roommate—Noct Leaflet.

She is also one of the Triad, a famous trio of the Academy.

"It's a book that a biologist wrote. If I don't also read anything other than Ruin's ancient documents and academic book, my knowledge will be one-sided."

I responded curtly with my eyes still fixed on the book.

Half of that reply is the truth, while the other half is a lie.

"Yes. I can understand that thinking itself, but aren't you tired instead by reading such difficult book?"

Although Noct is blandly retorting like that, she is also staying at my side with her usual quiet bearing.

This girl who is from a family lineage of servant while also possessing noble status act modestly toward everyone. She is worrying about me moderately.

The existence of such friend is a meager salvation for the current me.

Honestly speaking—it's because I've become poor with dealing with this time.

It's weird to say this myself but, I am a sociable person in the Academy.

—No, to speak in a more accurate term, I was behaving myself as a sociable person.

I also wouldn't do anything that doesn't match the situation, like intentionally reading a difficult book alone in a tea party where everyone is gathering once a month.

That was until my Nii-san got admitted into this academy of noble girls that is.

"Hey hey, Airi-chan. Is your big brother all right? I heard that he defeated a strong Abyss that somehow appeared inside the Academy the other day though—"

"Nii-san is only lightly injured and tired. He is mostly completely recovered already."

I respond to my classmate's question with a calm smile.

The existence of human shaped Ragnarok, Sacred Eclipse and the incident of the other day aren't informed to the majority of the students.

It seems that in order to avoid mayhem, the incident is blamed as the work of the Dragon Marauder's attack and Abyss's act.

"I see, I'm glad..... Then, I wonder if I can ask him to accept a request from me this time?"

.....Aa, here it come.

This is the reason why I stop acting sociable in the Academy.

I am a survivor of Old Empire Arcadia, an empire that imposed tyrannical rule and tendency of male chauvinism for a few hundred years in the past.

After the empire was destroyed by coup d'etat, myself was acquitted by the amnesty of her majesty the queen of the new kingdom even while I am given the status of criminal.

Because of that complicated circumstance, I was spending my days in the Academy without sparing any effort in acting social so I can be accepted by everyone, but—.

"Right right. I heard that the girl who requested Lux-senpai before this to coach her in piloting Drag-Ride passed her Class promotion exam—"

"Ee, I don't wanna making that kind of request outside of the Academy's practice class. It's a rare chance, so I will want to make a request like shopping outside or something."

(As I thought, it turn into this kind of topic in the end.....)

I control myself so I don't make a sigh while smiling awkwardly at the girls around me.

Since Nii-san came to the Academy, various incidents occurred in succession.

The admission into the Academy after the duel against Lisha-sama, the princess of the new kingdom.

The 'lover' incident from the request that was made by Krulcifer-san, an overseas student from Ymir Theocracy.

The official acceptance to join Syvalles after Nii-san was recognized by Celis-senpai, a third year student, the strongest in the Academy, and someone from the four great nobles.

And then the accomplishments of saving the Academy from various threats during that time.

Even though Nii-san also has special circumstance that gotten him called as the chore prince in addition of his position as an imperial family of the old empire, the more time pass, the situation isn't calming down, far from that Nii-san is instead becoming a person with endless problem in various senses.

And so, now that it has come to this, taking the stance of talking cheerfully by my own initiative or listening to the talk of the girls is the same as meaningless.

If I am thought to be participating in the conversation, oh dear, I will be rained down with concentrated fire of questions regarding Nii-san, like "What is your big brother's hobby?" or "What kind of girl is his type?".

That's why I'm pretending to be absorbed into reading a difficult book and suppress the damage to minimum.

(.....Well, if I can accept reality, it's comfortable in its own way though.)

Noct who is staying by my side is a silent person in the first place, so if I can be together with her, it won't be standing out even if I stay quiet.

Like that, a bustling time is passing by along with the usual tea party.



Even so, when I heard Nii-san is getting lionized in this kind of event, my feeling will grow quite complicated.

It should be a good thing that Nii-san is recognized and depended on by everyone in the Academy.

And yet—why is it, this itchy feeling.

(It's like Nii-san belongs to everyone—does it feel like that?)

I drop my gaze to the book's page to suppress down such fretfulness.

The book's content is the academic regarding living thing, their ecology, and their instinct.

A study is written that there are a lot of animal's children with adorable appearance so that it's easier to raise them and raise their survival rate.

And then, there is opinion that the working of an animal that is just born gets emotionally attached to their parent is also for such reason.

Because they are a living thing that is still weak and immature, they will instinctually fawn on other, depend on them, and get emotionally attached to them so that they will be protected.

—

"Say say—Airi-chan, do you have anyone?"

".....Yes?"

When the classmate in front of me suddenly asked me, I replied back with a stupid look.

"The theme of the talk just now seems to be 'story of first love', Airi."

Noct followed up from the side for me who got completely disconnected from the flow of the talk.

But, this is troubling.

"First love is it..... Eerr—unfortunately, right now I still have never experienced it."

"Eeehh....."

The girls who have already told their story raised their voice in dissatisfaction hearing my answer.

"Geez, if you're like that then isn't it the same like Noct? Is there no one around you that you are curious about? Like—a person who is similar like Airi-chan's big brother or something."

".....-!?"

Suddenly my back stiffen with a twitch as though my nape just get caressed.

My face reflexively got heated up and I looked down slightly.

(.....Wh, why am I making this kind of reaction?)

I glanced around, but it seems that everyone doesn't notice my agitation, so I'm a bit relieved.

"Oi oi, don't drag Airi-chan into forbidden love. And then, how is it? There should be one or two people you are curious——"

"The, there is none. That.....I'm still busy with my study, and there is also my position to consider."

I put up a mask of calm and somehow deny it one more time.

‘Tsk—’, I dodged the question of my dissatisfied classmates and escaped somehow.

"It can't be helped. Then, we will have Airi-san to talk about something at the next tea party, the next person——"

(Fuu, .....I'm saved.)

I let out a relieved sigh that the danger has passed while leaning my ear to the talk of the next girl.

Her first love was the man who was her private tutor.

Different from her strict parents, that man was gentle to her and reliable, so it seemed she fell in love, but—.

"But, in the end it was just my misunderstanding. At the past I thought he was an amazing person who can do anything but.....thinking carefully, I noticed that he was kind to me only because he was hired by my parents."

"....."

However, in the end it was a misunderstanding because the man was passionately instructing herself who was his young student. —It seem the result was only that.

"That's lonely. But, that kind of thing often happen isn't it? That anyone will think like that to a person who have done them a favor."

"Eee.....? Drag-Ride instructor is also quite my type normally though. Remember, the one who sometimes came from the capital—"

"That instructor is three times older than you, you know.....? He got beard, and he also has wife and children....."

Like that, the first love story develops into silly funny story.

Normally I will also smile and join the talk, but for some reason only for today I am chasing after the letters of the book with a serious face.

'Living thing that is still young will get attached with nearby living thing that is giving them protection. That is one kind of defensive instinct.'

The conclusion of the academic book that I've been reading since some time ago was printed like that.

"....."

I close the book I was reading with a snap and slowly stand up from my seat.

Then beside me Noct tilted her head slightly and look at me.

"What's the matter, Airi?"

"I recalled that I have a bit of business, so please excuse me early for today. Everyone, please enjoy yourself."

I told them like that with a smile and leave the dining hall.

I am quickly walking through the corridor while being aware that I am making a glum face.

"Sheesh, just what's with me."

I cannot understand at all.

Not toward the story of the girls, but toward my own emotion that suddenly turned displeased.

What the girl before this was saying was an ordinary and trivial story.

My emotion is only getting the wrong idea, it's a failure in my part.

Even though it would be fine if I just listened with a smile, for some reason I became unable to stay there very much, and like this I exited the dining hall.

"At this kind of time, there is nothing better than venting out the anger."

It's also annoying to just return to my room like this, so I go to the medical office to look at Nii-san's face.

Nii-san who had just fought Sacred Eclipse the other day is staying there in order to rest peacefully.

"Nii-san—are you awake?"

\*Knock knock\*, I lightly knocked and asked.

".....Airi? Yes, I'm awake. Come in."

I'm relieved that a calm voice replied back and opened the door.

The smell of medicine that is peculiar for the medical room and flower faintly tickle the nose.

"What's the matter, visiting this late? Did something happen?"

Fortunately there is also no girl visiting, Nii-san is alone by himself.

"It's nothing so please lie down."

I mildly stopped Nii-san who is trying to lift up his body.

Seeing Nii-san asking about me considerately right after we met caused my pace to go completely out of order.

".....It's nothing. I come to check whether Nii-san is acting reckless again or not. After all compared to Nii-san's injury and exhaustion, most things doesn't amount to much."

"A, ahaha....."

After I let out an exasperated sigh, Nii-san who seems to remember something to feel guilty about from that smiled wryly.

"Naturally, even after Nii-san's body is healed, you must not receive chore request for a while."

"Eh.....!? E, err, that—right."

"Please say that while looking at my eyes. Have Nii-san accepted such request already? You have haven't you?"

When I'm asking reproachfully, Nii-san make a flustered face while making excuse.

"No, that, it's only a verbal promise.....and my body is already fine."



"Haa....."

Astonishing. It's always like this.

Even though Nii-san went through difficult experience like every time, as expected Nii-san is strange somewhere.

"Surely Nii-san doesn't think anything about it if it's for the sake of someone else but, making promise without even thinking about your own body look even more irresponsible instead you know?"

"Uh....."

Nii-san stiffened still with an expression as though he is poked where it hurt.

A faint superiority complex tickles my heart pleasantly.

"Besides, was the one who made the request a girl first year who usually never really made request? Nii-san is really pampering to younger girl aren't you? It's filthy."

"N, no, that's because it was a really small request. Doing it for rehabilitation is——"

"What kind of request it is?"

I readily pressed the question to Nii-san who is lying down.

When I heard the detail, it seems that it's a request for accompaniment when going shopping outside.

"For now, rejected. The time for the outing is also ambiguous, and depending on the weight of the baggage Nii-san will be made to carry, it can become a burden for your body that has only recovered, I will go apologize to that girl and ask her to withdraw the request."

"No, I'm fine so——"

"Who was it that told me to not worry and yet still got close to death every time?"

When I make a sweet smile, Nii-san fall silent.

"Err, sorry Airi..... My bad but, if you can apologize for me to that girl——"

Nii-san tell me the detail of the of the girl who made the request.

"Yes, I'll do that. ——With this, it's my 107<sup>th</sup> win from 107 fight. I wonder, when will the day come where Nii-san defeats me?"

My chest feels refreshed.

(As I thought, my heart calm down when talking with Nii-san.)

I leave the medical room with a different smile from the one when I came.

While going back to the girl dormitory from the school building through a passage, it seem that the tea party is over right at that time. Girl students are flowing from the dining hall to the girl dormitory.

I find the girl who Nii-san promised to go shopping with and talk to her about the matter just now.

"And because of that, can you please wait a bit more about the request? If Nii-san's condition turn better, I will come to inform you."

"I understand. It's unfortunate, but it can't be helped. Airi-san too, you must be worried for you big brother——"

"Eh.....?"

The girl smiled bitterly and gave up, but it feels like my chest got suddenly pierced. My face reflexively turned serious.

While the chatting girls were walking through the passage, I am standing still there in a daze.

"....."

These girls don't know in detail of the Sacred Eclipse matter.

They also don't know how Nii-san got injured and exhausted for the sake of saving the Academy with Celis-senpai this time too.

The same with the matter of how until now Nii-san had also exposed himself to danger several times in the place that these girls didn't know.

Those are matters that are included in the information that is prohibited to be revealed, so I cannot convey it to everyone.

That's why, I also understand about their misunderstanding.

Perhaps they are thinking that I'm worried about Nii-san more than necessary and trying to monopolize him.

'but it can't be helped. Airi-san too, you must be worried for you big brother——'

(.....No, I'm over thinking it.)

It wasn't like they were saying that to me sarcastically.

I'm trying to monopolize Nii-san for my own sake, what I'm doing shouldn't mean like that.

"What's the matter Airi? Has you finished the business you mentioned before this?"

Suddenly Noct who was walking toward me come to a stop and look at my face.

Somehow, I'm feeling excessively gloomy.

I become unable to act the role of noble lady in my image like usual.

Even myself don't really understand what this itchy feeling is.

"Say—, I know this is unreasonable but I have a request, Noct."

But, I'm talking driven by the strong impulse welling up inside me.

"Can you, teach me the way to use Drag-Ride?"

With such voice that is filled with just a little stubbornness and resolve.

—

## Part 2

"We are going to practice Drag-Ride here?"

"Yes. There is no other place more optimum for training than the practice ground, but it can't be helped."

The next day at the early morning.

At the time when even the sun hadn't fully rise, I and Noct are at the back of the practice ground. We arrived at an empty space that is surrounded by trees.

Originally, a test run of Drag-Ride should be carried out in practice ground that is exclusively used for training.

But only this time the objective is so no one else won't find us, so we are holding the training at an empty lot inside the Academy's ground.

I received permission from the headmaster, Relie-san and I have already borrowed a Sword Device and general-purpose Drag-Ride Wyvern.

"We have finished the Drag-Ride's authentication just now, so this time please change into the pilot suit, Airi."

"Understood."

I nod to Noct's instruction and put my hand into the sleeve of the pilot suit—the clothes that is exclusively used when using Drag-Ride.

Finally the time has come for me to use Drag-Ride for real.

(.....For some reason, my heart is pounding fast.)

When I enrolled into the Academy, I was also tested for Drag-Ride's 'authentication' and 'contract'.

The people around me don't really aware of it, but my Drag-Ride aptitude count is at top level even among my year, because of that I'm holding a bit of expectation.

Of course, I who until now was doing nothing but learning through classroom lecture will experience difficulty to become able to use Drag-Ride.

"—Wait, what's with this appearance!? This is really embarrassing though....."

I who finished wearing pilot suit reflexively cover my chest and abdomen with my hands while muttering that.

Although I am more or less also a civil official candidate, but I have been staying for long in the Academy, so I should be used to look at the figure of other students wearing this but—.

"Yes. I have been wondering whether Airi can immediately get used to it. After all it's something like that."

Noct told me with her usual bland expression.

I am also not wearing underwear, the shape and peculiar fabric are also clinging tightly on my body, so when I'm actually wearing it for real, my face turned red.

"It's amazing, that you can be so nonchalant wearing something like this every time....."

After all, with this the body line of the wearer is completely exposed, so it make me feel really bothered by other's gaze.

And then it also cause me to be a bit conscious of Noct's figure who is also wearing the same outfit before me.

(.....As I thought, I'm—)

"Airi, there is no need for you to mind about my breasts. I have heard that Airi's breasts in its own way are strongly demanded by male of specific



interest."

"I don't need such follow up-!"

When I yelled that with my face turning warm, Noct deflect "My apologies. But, Airi looks good in that" with her usual composure.

"Then, can you equip the Drag-Ride right away?"

".....Yes."

I pulled myself together and took a deep breath.

With a voice that is shaking with nervousness, I pull out my Sword Device following Noct's instruction.

Bizarre silver line is running on the surface of the Drag-Ride's controller.

I push the button on the grip and send the thought of summoning.

"—Come, the winged dragon of crest, the symbol of power. Obey my sword and soar, Wyvern."

Right after I muttered the Passcode, particles of light gather in high speed and the flight type general purpose Drag-Ride—Wyvern is summoned.



"Connect – On"

When I further perform the connection operation, the Drag-Ride quickly unfold into countless armor and instantly cover my whole body.

The sensation of thick and heavy metallic armor causes me to hold my breath spontaneously.

Until this point it's going just as I imagined but—,

".....-!? Wha, what is this, it's really.....heavy.....!?"

When I try to move my body, I notice that I almost cannot move.

It's stiff—heavy.

It feels like my body is buried within a lump of steel.

"Yes. It's something like that. It will become like that if the Drag-Ride's movement doesn't move in tandem with the user's flesh body, so it will be quite tiring just from wearing it while you are still not used to it."

"I, is that so.....?"

The driving force of Drag-Ride come from a special jewel called Force Core.

That was why I completely thought that there will be no weight burden to the user but—I was naïve.

"Then first, I wish to teach you the basic of movements. Airi, are you prepared?"

".....Ye, yes!"

I nod at Noct's question and challenge the basic of the basic of basic movements.

And then, a time that is completely unfitting for me begin.



## Part 3

"Haa, haa.....haa.....-!"

—A few minutes later.

Pathetically, I am unable to do even the basic movements properly. The armor was dispelled and I'm sitting down under a tree.

"I finally remember..... Why I wished to enroll as civil official candidate of a military officer cadet—"

In the test half a year ago when my enrollment was processed, certainly my aptitude count for Drag-Ride was outstandingly high.

But, my score in the essential piloting skill, reflexes, stamina, and the like were remarkably low. So I gave up that path from early stage.

"Yes. Certainly Airi's Drag-Ride aptitude count is high, but Drag-Ride cannot be handled with just that. Even if you have the disposition to hold your breath for long underwater, that doesn't mean you will be able to swim well. This is the same."

".....I see, I understand clearly."

I comprehend it while breathing hard with heaving shoulders.

My hope that perhaps, I too can also fight as a Drag-Knight is crushed.

Even so—.

"However, I will show you that I can at least master the basic control. At the very least when I'm isolated, I will be able to evacuate to a safe place by my own strength—"

"No, you should stop with that, Airi."

".....Why is that?"

I ask back when Noct instantly disagreed.

What is there is Noct's calm expression that isn't particularly different from usual.

"Airi is clever, so you should have understood already. Just how dangerous it is to use Drag-Ride with half-baked skill."

"....."

I cannot reply right away at what Noct pointed out matter-of-factly.

I know.

I know, but I was pretending to not know.

The pertinent knowledge and skill are indispensable for controlling Drag-Ride, using it in the wrong way will invite great danger instead.

And it might not affect me alone, but it can even harm someone else.

But—.

"I'm sorry. Can you teach me just a bit more?"

I endure it with an effort and ask that.

"But—"

"Please. Just a bit more, it's fine even if it's just several hour. If it seems that I'm still cannot do the basic properly even then, I will give up, that's why....."

"....."

This time, I'm borrowing the Drag-Ride in the end is for the sake of tuning it. That is how I'm telling the Academy.

If it's exposed to the Academy that I am using the Drag-Ride without permission, not just me, even Noct might receive punishment too.

I know that I'm asking for something unreasonable.

That's why, I intend to give up if I'm denied further than this.

"Yes. I understand."

".....Eh?"

While I'm silently casting down my gaze, the Drake Noct is wearing is approaching my Wyvern. A cord is stretched from the shoulder mechanism and connected to my Drag-Ride.

Right after that, a character string made of light is surfacing on my Wyvern's head.

"Use your Sword Device to allow adjustment by my Drake. I will put a limitation so that the Wyvern won't react to command outside of basic movement."

".....Please."

It seems Noct is putting in minimal lock so that I won't commit a large mistake.

With this, it seems the great danger of rampage due to control failure is gone.

"As long as you practice in this empty lot, I believe the probability of getting found out is low if it's only for two or three days. I will also patrol around secretly."

"I'm sorry, Noct."

"Please don't mind it. In any case, Airi is Lux-san's little sister as expected."

"Eh——?"

Noct who is always silent and bland is unusually making a faint smile while speaking.



"You are unexpectedly forceful and reckless when it's for the sake of someone else. That side of you two is really similar."

"....."

Noct dispel her Drake while saying just that. Then she leave.

"—Yosh."

I resolve myself, then I restart my Drag-Ride training with a bit of rest in between.

And then—time pass for a while.

(Even so it's the worst.)

Annoyingly, the more I do it the more I notice the nonexistent of my talent.

Perhaps because of the height of my aptitude in mind control operation, I'm relying on that, but my in the end my body cannot catch up and the body control operation doesn't work.

The switches that are installed at the inside of the armored arms and legs will adjust the power output and angle when they are operated in precise order and timing that match the action, and yet operating them require quite the strength, and doing it with precise movement is far more difficult.

If the armor's movement and the flesh body's motion don't mesh with each other in high precision, it will only become mere burden on the body.

My stamina that is already little even at the best of times is getting taken away entirely in the blink of eye.

Certainly if enemy find this kind of sluggish Drag-Knight, I will become nothing but target.

After all someone holding a weapon also means that they will be targeted as threat.

"Kuh, haa....."

The pilot suit feel unpleasant with all the sweat soaking it.

Even so I'm simply continuing the basic movements Noct taught me.

I who was sickly as a child and lived in the imperial court of the old empire where there was nothing but enemy around was completely reliant to Nii-san, my only family who I can trust.

Right now I have grew up, accumulate knowledge as civil official candidate, and I also can decipher Ruin's ancient document, I also can receive work from the Academy.

But—,

—

'but it can't be helped. Airi-san too, you must be worried for you big brother—'

'Living thing that is still young will get attached with nearby living thing that is giving them protection. That is one kind of defensive instinct.'

—

That sentence which I heard from my classmate and the description from the book that I was reading at that time were overlapping inside my head.

.....Perhaps, I haven't changed.

Perhaps I was depending on Nii-san since the past in order to protect my sickly self.

Perhaps even now I am using my position as little sister, trying to monopolize Nii-san simply just because I don't want anything bad to happen to me.

The love and feeling as family inside my heart, they are all just misunderstanding—.

"That's, not true.....!"

That's vexing, unforgivable—that's why, I'm doing something like this, thinking that if only I have the strength to protect myself even just for a bit.....

"Am I thinking, that I don't want to be treated as a child....."

I'm making a self-depreciating smile while moving the Drag-Ride further.

"Nn.....? Cold-!?"

The sensation of water drop falling on my nape caused me to look up to the sky spontaneously.

The cloudy sky visible in circular shape from this space that is surrounded by trees is starting to rain drop by drop.

\*Achoo\*.

A small sneeze leaked out.

The autumn rain is freezing cold.

A heavier rain will come soon.

There is no place where I can properly avoid the rain nearby this empty plot.

"....."

I stop taking break in between so that my body won't cool down and continue the training of basic movements.

Walking, low altitude flying, then swinging Blade.

As expected, it's not going well.

Because a degree of alignment with flesh body's movement is necessary, it will be no good unless I also learn the best motion for swinging sword.

It's also no good if I don't have basic stamina to some degree.

I finally understand the meaning why the class of military officer cadet also include training like sword art, archery, and running.

I also comprehend the reason why Syvalles's captain, Celis-senpai is that strong.

As for me—it's impossible.

The weight of fatigue is coiling around my whole body, my muscles are even starting to feel pain.

"Nii-san, I....."

Even so, while I'm continuing to simply swinging the sword stupidly, the limit comes too quickly.

"-.....!?"

\*Flash-\* The head part of the Drag-Ride I'm wearing shine, and the armor vanish from my whole body.

It's enforced cancellation when the user's stamina reaches the limit.

Strength leaves my body along with an intense dizziness, the ground slant and my consciousness is receding.

"U, a....."

Unable to even support my tottering body, I sink down on the ground.

The rain that is getting harder gradually is mercilessly wetting my body.

".....It's, cold."

The sensation of my body is dulling and getting weaker.

Just like those days, when I was doing nothing but lying on bed in the imperial court.

I hate my body constitution.

But, perhaps it's actually like this.

In the end, I'm, just taking advantage of Nii-san, depending on him—.

—

"—There you are, Airi."

—

"Eh.....?"

The voice that suddenly come make me lift up my face.

A man with gentle impression, with silver hair and grey eyes like me.

It's no one else but my Nii-san who is in front of me when I notice.

I am dumbfounded for a while seeing that sight which should be impossible.

Seeing me unable to reply well, Nii-san scratches his head with a troubled look.

"I heard from Noct that Airi is here. That—sorry I'm always making you worry. But, I'm fine. That's why, next time I won't make Airi worried for sure."

Nii-san make an apologetic smile to reassure me.

Nii-san often made that kind of face at me when it was a painful time at the imperial court.

—Aa, as I thought.

Nii-san is the best person in the world who can make me feel relieved from the bottom of my heart.

".....I'm not forcing myself or anything. I'm all right."

But the current me reply brusquely like that.

"I only wanted to obtain information of Drag-Ride. Writing record and investigation and information gathering are works that I can do."

".....I see."

Nii-san smiles wryly and lend a hand to me who are still sitting on the ground, unable to stand.

"-.....!?"

I who take that hand and try to stand up totter on my feet. Seeing that, Nii-san turn his back on me and crouch down.

"Wai-....., what are you doing!? I'm not——"

As expected, doing that is embarrassing.

Getting piggyback from Nii-san at this age, such thing.....

"It's quite far from here until the dormitory, the strong is also getting stronger. Let's go home quickly."

Nii-san reject my opposition with an expression that doesn't care at all.

In the first place this is something that started from my selfishness, with that being the case, I folded after feeling conflicted for a few seconds.

"It will be fine, no one is looking, so it's not embarrassing."

"That's not the problem....."

I'm still dressed in pilot suit.

I'm soaked wet with rain and sweat, my skin is also exposed a lot..... various things are problematic.

I'm carried on Nii-san's back while feeling my face reddening from embarrassment.

Somehow, Nii-san's back that I'm feeling for the first time after a few years feels really wide—but, it's warm like in the past.

"I'll hurry a bit, so hold on tight okay?"

Nii-san is going through between the trees with the speed of fast walking.

"Somehow, this feel nostalgic."

Nii-san is talking to me while my consciousness feels sleepy, between reality and dream.

".....I'm sorry that I made you worry, Nii-san."

I loosen my heart that was acting brave and muttered that honestly.

A kind voice come back toward such me.

"I'm not forcing myself or anything."

Nii-san's voice was gentle and warm.

"Because Airi is there, because my only family is staying there for me, that's why I can do my best."

".....I know."

—After all I'm the same.

I studied a lot in the Academy, accompanying the people in high position, everything is for the sake of Nii-san.

For Nii-san, my only family.

I cannot say that out loud, instead I quietly put more strength into the arms holding on Nii-san's shoulders.

—



And then, my challenge that is really unlike me—the Drag-Ride training quietly closed its curtain without anyone knowing except Noct and Nii-san.

—

## Part 4

".....You can go back already, Nii-san. Or rather, how long you are planning to stay in this room?"

More than ten minutes later, inside the Academy's school building.

I'm sitting on the bed inside medical office and said that with an exasperated face.

After returning to my room at girl dormitory, I was helped by Noct to change from the pilot suit into plain clothes, wiped my body, warmed myself.

After that, I might catch a cold, so I received examination from the female doctor, and just in case I was told to stay here for a night but—.

"No, I'm a bit worried. The doctor has gone home already too—"

"Haa....."

I let out a sigh and drink the beverage prepared by Noct for me, hot water with honey and ginger added in it.

The taste is a bit particular, but it's delicious and warm.

It seems to be a secret formula of Leaflet house that is from lineage of servant.

When I recovered my usual composure, I direct an exasperated fixed gaze at Nii-san.

"Nii-san who was ordered to rest until only a little while ago, why is it necessary for you to stay close to me when I'm only at risk of getting cold for now? I'm fine so please just go back."

"Ah, yo, you're right. Just this much won't be a problem for Airi anymore isn't it? Then, if there is something, call me right away okay?"

"I understand. I will call. I will rely on Nii-san. Now are you satisfied?"

"Ri, right. Then rest well, Airi."

"Good night, Nii-san."

We exchanged only those words before Nii-san quietly get out of the medical room.

‘Fuu’ I let out a small sigh and lie down on the bed, staring up to the ceiling.

".....It’s a little lonely when Nii-san actually left."

Honestly speaking, I’m so exhausted I cannot even lift up my body already. My muscles here and there are painful.

"But surely it’s fine like this."

I muttered that with a smile and closed my eyes.

Even though it’s different from the past, right now there is a way to depend for the present.

I’m not just fawning on Nii-san like when I was a child.

I will do what I can do to the best of my ability, and only ask for Nii-san’s help in things that I cannot do.

"That is, the proper relationship that should be between the grown up me and Nii-san. Surely....."

My consciousness is suddenly falling into darkness.

It will be nice if I can see a dream of me and Nii-san when we were little. I’m sleeping while thinking a bit like that.

—

## Part 5

"Fua....."

The next morning, when I wake up, I rub my sleepy eyes while crawling out from the bed.

The dazzling sunlight is shining in from the curtain's gap, telling me of the autumn morning.

"-.....!? My body feels very painful here and there. I wish Noct can lend me her shoulder."

The result is terrible as expected.

Perhaps I'm lucky that at least my bone and muscle aren't damaged.

In order to return to my shared room in the girl dormitory, I'm slowly getting up for the time being.

Then—.

"—Eh!?"

At the other side of the cloth that is partitioning the bed from the room.

Inside the room where even the doctor shouldn't have come yet, there is the figure of a person.

"Zzz, zzz....."

It's Nii-san.

He is still in his uniform like yesterday, sleeping right nearby in sitting position with a single thick blanket wrapped around his body.

While I am stiffened in a daze, Nii-san seems to detect my presence and slowly open his eyes.

"N, nn..... Ah, good morning, Airi."

"It's not good morning. What are you doing there, are you stupid?"

"Uwa, that's cruel-!? N, no, I plan to go back once when it's dawn but—I got careless"

Nii-san is making excuse like that while being strangely abashed.

As expected, it seemed Nii-san was worried about me and stayed inside the room for the whole night.

Just like how he waited on me the whole night when I was tormented by fever at my childhood.

.....In the end, it's like this.

Both me and Nii-san hasn't changed in the slightest in this aspect.

".....Haa. It will be troubling if Nii-san collapsed because you are looking after me, so can I ask Nii-san to call Noct here for me? If it's this time already, surely she has awoken now I believe."

"Ah, ri, right. Got it! Wait for a bit!"

Perhaps Nii-san is relieved seeing my healthy state, he smiled wryly even while walking away in a hurry.

I saw off that familiar back with a faint smile.

"Surely, it's like that."

I put my hand on my chest and mutter that with a peaceful feeling.

It's not the imprinting from when I was sickly, it's also not instinct as living thing, much less of it being misunderstanding or whim of puberty.

I understand that this feeling of mine isn't anything like those.

"There is no way it will change now after this long. After all my feeling toward Nii-san is the same all this time since the past."

I open the curtain and window and breathed in the tranquil air of the morning.

The warm sunlight and the perfectly clear autumn sky.

—

A day of Academy of Cross Field will begin today too.

# **Chapter 2: Lisha Chapter – The Princess's Cooking Struggle Chronicle**



## Part 1

The morning of me, Lizsharte Atismata is usually late.

It's not like I'm indulging in indolence by misusing my authority as princess.

My night is late so my morning is also late. The situation is simply like that, it's an extremely natural affair.

I'll force myself to wake up if I have class, but if it's rest day or holiday where there will be no class, it's my custom to sleep until afternoon.

"Fuaaa....."

Inside the Academy's ground that is located at the first block of Fort City Cross Field.

I'm rubbing my eyes while yawning inside the Drag-Ride atelier there.

There is the smell of metal and oil. Countless disassembled parts and blueprints are scattered about. This is my workplace.

It seems that I fell asleep while still wearing my personal white gown that I am wearing above my uniform.

Lux doesn't come to wake me up because I told him that I won't be in the atelier today, and yet...

"Uu, my throat hurts....."

As expected, I shouldn't work until dawn.

But, well, once I got passionate about what I'm doing, it's hard to stop midway.

It doesn't matter whether it's artisan or blacksmith, if they are someone with fixation, surely they will understand my feeling.

But—, today my condition is a bit terrible.

".....As expected, it will be bad if I caught a cold like this."

It's troublesome but it can't be helped.

I dragged my languid body and head toward the nearby medical office of the Academy.

—

## Part 2

"Ua, as expected this period of time is chilly....."

Outdoor at late autumn is cold on the skin, my shoulders are trembling.

Even though today is a holiday, several female students can be seen watering the flower bed at the courtyard.

"Good afternoon, Lisha-sama. Today is also cold isn't it?"

"Nn, good morning. I want to ask something, is our school's doctor coming?"

"The doctor.....is it? Err, I greeted her when we passed each other before this, so I think she might be here though——"

"I see, that helps. Thank you."

After exchanging greeting with a junior which has subtly time difference from each other, I head toward the medical office in the school building.

When I'm standing in front of a mirror hanging on the wall midway, I saw my face.

Crimson eyes and honey blond hair that is tied into side tail.

And then, the petite body in uniform appearance.

This is me, the princess of this new kingdom, Lizsharte Atismata's appearance.

My face that is looking somewhat sleepy is a bit concerning but.....right now it can't be helped.

"Is the doctor here? My throat is a bit painful so I want medicine."

I knock on the door lightly and enter into the medical room.

The chalk white room that neatly tidied has the smell of flower and characteristic medicine.

"My, isn't this the princess. It's rare that you are visiting here isn't it?"

The exclusive female doctor of the Academy welcomes me with a smile.

She is still young for a doctor, and it seems among the students they are saying that she is quite the beauty.

"Ah..... The, then doctor, excuse me-!"

The student who was already inside rushed through beside me in a bit of panic out of the room.

Her behavior caught my attention a bit but, I put it out of my mind.

I sit down on the chair in front of the doctor and have her check my throat just in case.

"Even though the campus festival has been over just now, but there are already injured person. Everyone has it hard."

"It's not injury. I'm only giving her a bit of counsel. The care of the student's heart is included in my work. —Now, open your mouth?"

The doctor made a smile that is filled with implication and take a look inside my mouth.

It seems there isn't any particular problem with it. The examination is over with me receiving a bit of medicine.

"I think your throat is still fine. Just—it's not really good to stay up late you know? Your body's immunity system will also deteriorate doing that, you have a beautiful skin and hair there, it will be a waste to worsen them."

"Right now I'm at the final scene of my development. Combined with the ancient documents regarding Drag-Ride that has been newly deciphered, it will become possible to do something that no one has ever seen before. If that become reality, surely that guy will also be happy—"

"You said that guy, could you refer to Lux-kun there?"

"Hawah.....!?"

The female doctor slipped out a chuckle seeing that she hit the bull's eye, agitating me.

Lux Arcadia.

He was once a prince of the old empire that imposed a despotic rule. Together with the establishment of the new kingdom, he was given the status of criminal that is burdened with the obligation as the chores prince. His nickname is the Weakest Undeclared.

I who was enchanted by his strength and will enrolled him into the Academy, where he was taken in as the only male student here.

"Pardon me. I heard the story a little. He too accepted your request and became your personal knight—how nice being young."

".....I, if the examination is over, I'll go back now."

I who become embarrassed get up to escape, but,

"But, it's a waste. Even though you are putting in effort to obtain him after much trouble, you are mistaking your method—"

".....What do you mean?"

My foot comes to a stop still hearing her words. I turn around.

There, the doctor is looking at me with smile that is full of implication.

"About what I'm counseling that girl who was here just now you see, it's about her discord with a friend at the same grade. It seemed that because she was immersing herself into the necessary study too much, their relationship became estranged."

"After all everything needs to be done in moderation."

When I reply carelessly like that, the doctor urged me to sit down by quietly pointing at a chair beside her.

"....."

After I'm sitting down while tilting my head, she begin to continue her talk.

"You're right. Certainly that girl made a mistake with her moderation. But, the relationship between man and woman is even more complicated you know? Event the instructor of you all, Raigree Balheart too, she immersed herself too much in her Drag-Knight duty that she missed her chance of marriage—she has the past of her lover running away from her."

"Wa, was that so.....?"

This is the first time I hear this but, I'm also a bit surprised that this doctor know about it.

Speaking of Instructor Raigree, even though she is a woman, but she is an accomplished Drag-Knight even since the era of old empire, even now she is an object of envy for the students.

"I, it's unfortunate, but she had no luck with man huh."

"You appointed him—Lux-kun as your personal knight, and I think that it's a really good thing. But, right now it looks like you are feeling content with that contract and putting your effort into a wrong direction."

".....Fuh"

I showed a wry smile at the gentle warning of the doctor and lift up my face.

"I don't hate that, trying to threaten me who even though I look this but I'm still a princess, what's more it's just for killing time. —But, right now I'm busy. My Drag-Ride research is also for Lux's sake, and it will also be necessary for me to prepare for the battle in the future. I'm going back now."

"Now, don't say that. Can you please listen a bit more? Giving advice to student is like an occupational disease for me. Of course, I don't intend to force you or anything though—how about it?\

The doctor isn't even perturbed by my objection and continues with a mature way of talking.

It's not a problem to ignore her but, I'm also a bit curious to just turn her down like this.

"Let's hear it, just in case. Although it's of a different type, but I too am someone afflicted with occupational disease after all."

"Thank you. Then, I'll speak frankly. You are doing a really great blunder. If you are thinking to make him yours as a woman, then this mistake of yours can even be called as fatal."

"Wha-.....!?"

Those words that are like a surprise attack flustered me.

My face that is reflected on the mirror at the wall is becoming bright red.

"You have an important position and a really rare talent even in this new kingdom. You are fighting as a member of this Academy's Syvalles and as a princess, you are also developing Drag-Ride, and soon you will also begin your public duty as a princess. What's more, you are performing them with your all. You are thinking that doing those will also be for his sake—but you see"

The doctor paused her words for the moment and brings her face closer to me.

"I think that your effort is wonderful but—in the end, human is animal, especially the creature called 'man'."

".....What do you want to say?"

"It will be difficult to make him yours with your method, that's what I'm saying."

The doctor asserted that and smiled wryly.

"Man won't be charmed at woman even if you show them a noble objective or pursuing the ideal. Rather than those kinds of things, they will come to like woman by following a more instinctual emotion. That's why at this rate you will fail. Especially in your situation, there are a lot of formidable rivals around you correct?"

"....."

'There is no such thing.' I cannot say that.

Several things come to mind hearing her words.

Krulcifer whose push is excessively strong recently, Lux's childhood friend Philuffy who is clingy on him, Syvalles's captain Celis who use the campus festival as excuse to give Lux an indecent kiss.

And then recently even that ero woman is sticking close to Lux.

"It's wonderful that you are putting so much effort. But—your thinking that it will link to him recognizing you as 'woman' is mistaken. Like that, to him you won't be nothing more but 'his lord as a knight' or 'an able mechanic'."

"....."

The doctor's words are tearing apart my chest.

Certainly, it's great that I made Lux as my personal knight, but it's not like my relationship with him at personal level is deepened because of that....., perhaps it's true.

".....I, I get it. Bu, but—what should I do then?"

Until now I'm spending a life that is mostly unrelated with man, so I don't really understand the way to make a boy the same age like Lux happy.



And so when I ask bluntly, the doctor gives me the answer.

"Let's see, to make a boy in your heart fall for you, first it's important to confirm your weapon."

"My, weapon.....?"

"Yes. Just like how everything has strength and weakness, first you need to be aware of your strong point, and then attacking using that. It's a solid method. —And so, first can you take off that gown for me?"

The doctor is giving such instruction along with a smile.

Somehow this woman's mood is suddenly getting better, so I'm feeling somewhat uneasy, but there is no turning back after this far.

After I took off my white work gown, I'm getting stared from the top of my head until the tip of my toes with a gaze that is like licking all over my body.

After a while, it seems that the check of the 'weapon' in my possession is finished.

"First I'll point out your weakness. To start with, that outfit is no good. Your bed hair is still remaining, and the smell of metal and oil drifting from you after tinkering with Drag-Ride for the whole night is also a minus."

"Guah.....!?"

My heart is mercilessly gouged out and I spontaneously groaned.

The, the things that I'm feeling complicated about.....

Those things can't be helped isn't it? If I'm picky about those, I won't be able to research or doing maintenance.....

"Before meeting with him, you should take a bath and wash off the smell. Then use a bit of perfume too. Also—you have a special status of being a princess, so wearing things like lovely clothes is also important."

"I, I see....."

I almost don't have any other clothes than uniform. It's hard to say that.

After all, something like a timing to dress up won't come to me except when I'm back in the palace at the capital.

At that time I will just wear the dress that the maids prepared for me.

".....And, have you finished already with the talk that will depress me?"

"Yes, then next I'll give a follow up."

The doctor smiles wryly seeing my resentful gaze to her, then she continues her talk.

"First your beautiful hair and eye color are really leaving an impression. Your slender and petite body is really feminine and lovely. Your breasts too are big for your built, if you make use of it well, boy won't be able to hold themselves back."

"U, ah....."

Although she is of the same sex, but it's still embarrassing no matter what to get my face and body commented like that.

When I'm getting aware of the heat in my face, the grin of doctor who sees that is getting deeper.

"That embarrassed expression is also really good. It's your strong point to be able to react naturally like that."

".....The, then, it will be fine as long as I just watch my appearance in front of Lux?"

"No—that's still the half of it."

"Eh.....?"

The doctor brought her face closer with a suggestive smile.

"To establish a lead from your rivals, it's essential to fulfill the more instinctual desire of the boy further. I will specially instruct you in the specific method to do that now."

"Ma, man's instinctual desire.....you said?"

The bewitching expression of the female doctor that I'm seeing for the first time caused me to gulp.

A concrete plan to make man your prisoner.

I listen attentively to that method and promise to execute it.

—

## Part 3

"Eerrrr. A boy's favorite food.....is it?"

Ten-odd minutes later. I headed from the school building to the girl dormitory and visited the room where the Academy's famous trio—the Triad are gathering.

The silent first year student, Noct.

The boisterous second year student, Tillfur.

And then, the leader, the third year student Sharis. The members who composed the trio are the people who I first talked with.

—After that, I was taught 'the way to fulfill the instinctual desire of man' from the doctor and decided to give it a try, in order to grasp Lux's heart.

—

'Boy's instinctual desire—that is appetite for food. Boys at that age are always hungry. How is it, do you think that you will be able to do it?'

'O, of course! Even like this recently I'm also practicing cooking bit by bit. I've become more or less able to cook—'

I nodded strongly at the doctor's words and showed a smile.

But, the doctor smiled wryly with a bit of troubled looks while continuing her talk.

'That's really great. But, it's still not enough. Isn't there any other child who is more skilled than you in cooking?'

'Uu.....'

Certainly that's true.

Although I'm secretly practicing somewhat, based from what I saw from the cooking at Ries Island, there is no way I'm a match against Krulcifer who was able to cook using the available stock at hand on the spot.

Or rather, I feel like I still cannot win even against Lux who has been doing odd jobs for long time.

'There is one important point in that. That boy's—favorite food, it's fine if you only practice that one. If you become able to cook at least his favorite food better than anyone, you will be able to overcome the wall of skill and experience.'

'.....I see! Then I'll do that!'

After the strategy is decided, what's left is only to carry it out.

I who received the doctor's education quickly think to practice Lux's favorite food—and notice suddenly.

.....Wait a second?

Thinking back, what is Lux's favorite food?

I who was aware of the fundamental lack of information first begin to investigate in order to learn it.

—

"Let's seeee. As expected if it's a boy, they will like meat more than vegetable won't they?"

After a short pause, Tillfur answered my question like that.

The answer is somewhat lacking but, my question is also ambiguous so it can't be helped.

It will be troubling if my tactic get seen through, so there is also no way I can say Lux's name.

"Hmm, meat dish.....huh. How about you two?"

I'm taking memo with a small paper and a quill while trying to ask Sharis and Noct too.

"Unfortunately few of my relatives are male, so I don't happen to have an answer I'm confident with."

Sharis smiled wryly like that awkwardly, while Noct nodded with her usual calm expression.

"Yes. I'm also the same.....but, if I'm forced to say my personal impression, I assumed that there is no food that he particularly like or hate."

"I see, it seems that the food he hate is few, huh..... Hm?"

While I'm taking memo, I tilted my head at Noct's way of talking that is a bit strange.

".....Wait a second, what's with your line. Do you know what I'm trying to do?"

"Eh? Lisha-sama, aren't you wishing to make something for Lux-chi to eat?"

"Uah.....!?"

Tillfur's sentence that she said with a serious face caused me to spontaneously feel flustered.

"Ho, how did you know that!? I still haven't ask until that detailed!?"

Sharis suddenly smiled at the question I spontaneously said.

"Princess Lisha. This might be an uncalled advice but, in this world, there are things that even though you don't notice it yourself but is obvious from a glance when seen from the outside."

"No, it's not that exaggerated though. She is completely transparent already....."

"Yes. In the first place, even including the staffs there aren't that many male in this Academy."

"....."

Well, doesn't matter.

If it's only these three who realize it, it shouldn't be that much of a problem.

In the end it seems that the three doesn't know about Lux's preference, so I begin my next investigation.

Perhaps it will be faster if I ask Lux directly, but I want to keep that as the last resort.

I want to practice while keeping it a secret as much as possible, and it will be also troubling if those around me notice.

After all I have to take the lead no matter what in the end.

"At the welcoming party that Princess Lisha opened at the beginning, it seemed that he was enjoying eating every food though. How about trying to observe him at that kind of time?"

"-.....!? I see, there is also that way!"

I who get a flash of inspiration from Sharis's words decide my next strategy.

"That helps a lot, you three! Then, please don't mention anything about this to other!"

I told the Triad that before waiting for a chance.

—

## Part 4

"Thank you for your hard work today, Lisha-sama."

"Y, yeah....., it's good you came. Then, let's eat."

"It's lonely that everyone isn't here today but, let's eat."

At the lunch time the next day, by coincidence I obtain the chance of eating lunch together with Lux, just the two of us.

Normally Krulcifer, the childhood friend the airhead girl, so various other women will sit together with Lux, so it's fortunate that this situation immediately arrives on my lap.

We are sitting on the curb at the courtyard, eating the foods from the dining hall that are placed on a wooden tray.

Sandwich with olive oil and pepper, salty soup with chicken bones and vegetables, fresh baked bread, chicken grilled with herb, and a fourth of orange. And then tea, those are the menu for today.

The menu isn't that extravagant, but there is no doubt that this meal is quite balanced.

I don't really know what kind of food Lux had at the era of old empire, but at the very least he looks like he is really enjoying this lunch.

It doesn't seem like there is anything he doesn't really like, but conversely it's also difficult to understand what he likes.

".....Eh? Lisha-sama, is there something on my face?"

"Ah, no, it's nothing."

I almost got misunderstood because I stared too much.



However, there is no way I can overlook Lux eating, so I keep stealing glances at him.

Even so, the cooking here is delicious.

I don't have the confidence of making something this delicious, but if I narrowed my training to focus only at Lux's favorite food, will I be able to manage somehow?

When I am staring hard at the side dish on the tray and Lux's mouth while thinking such thing, Lux suddenly directed his fork that got chicken meat stabbed on it toward me.

"Please. Lisha-sama."

"Eh.....?"

"You must be hungry aren't you? I'm still recovering from my injury, so I cannot eat that much."

Seeing my perplexed face from suddenly getting addressed, Lux abruptly smiled and said such thing.

"Yo, you're wrong! It's not like I'm looking at your meal because I want some—it's....."

"It's okay to not act so reserved. Please eat."

Overwhelmed by Lux who is showing a carefree smile, in the end I accepted the meat.

(Ho, how could this be.....! Now it looks like I'm a glutton woman!)

I helplessly eat the roasted chicken even while feeling shocked.

The taste is nice, but most likely this isn't Lux's favorite food because he offered it to me like this.

"Is it delicious, Lisha-sama?"

"Ah, yeah....."

However, when I'm looking at Lux who looked somehow happy, I can even think that perhaps this isn't so bad.

"If possible, I want, you to continue feeding me like this though....."

"Eh.....?"

Realizing the words that I unintentionally spoke, my face spontaneously turns red.

"I, it's nothing at all! The, then, I have work so bye!"

I quickly gulped the meat and leave from that place hurriedly.

—

## Part 5

"Fuu, I failed..... But, just what in the world Lux's favorite food is?"

The class is over already, it's after school.

I'm walking inside the school building once more while thinking that all this time.

Thinking that Lux might buy snack somewhere because I stole half of his chicken, I was watching Lux, but that guy was just continuing his chore works indifferently.

"No other way. This is an emergency measure but, I've got no choice other than searching for someone who seems like they know more....."

Thinking that, I searched around inside the school building, before finally I found that person's figure.

".....? Princess, what's your business?"

When I stand beside her chair, a female student look at me with an absentminded expression.

A daughter of a great financial conglomerate and the headmaster's little sister, Philuffy Aingram, the airheaded girl.

"There is something that I want to ask frankly, do you know Lux's favorite food?"

She is more or less Lux's childhood friend. If it's this girl, surely she knows one or two his favorite foods, no doubt about it.

I didn't really want to ask because it might cause my strategy to get exposed, but well, this girl looks like she is slow on the uptake in that kinda thing, so it will surely be all right. Maybe.

"Lu-chan, like hotcake or the like, you know?"

"I, is that so? That's unexpected....."

I who obtained answer right away feign calmness while taking memo hurriedly.

It's not like I don't feel that the answer is unexpected for a man, but perhaps it's unexpectedly might be so.

"Also, things like donut, or cookie, or pie or cake too—if I remember right."

".....Wait a second!? Come to think of it, before this you tried to make Lux eat a stupidly huge pile of hotcakes right!? Isn't that just your favorite food!?"

I become suspicious of where this is going on and stop taking memo while asking.

".....That's so. But when I made them, Lu-chan will also be happy and eat them. So it's not wrong, I think."

"....."

I sigh inside my heart and crush the memo I had just written in my grip.

I got the hunch that this one is a miss.

Surely they weren't something that Lux hate, but it's dangerous to just accept this airheaded girl's statement at face value.

".....Yosh. Now that it has come to this, I'll ask the most likely winner!"

I resolved myself, left behind the airheaded girl who is tilting her head, and headed toward a certain place.

—

## Part 6

"Nii-san's favorite food? I also don't know though?"

"There is no way that's true! Never mind that just tell me!"

When I reflexively yelled, the students at the surrounding turned their gaze to glance here. The girl in front of me turns an exasperated fixed stare at me.

"Lisha-sama. This is a library, so can I please ask you to be a bit quieter?"

"I, I got it. More importantly what's the meaning of this? No matter what you should know about it, you're his little sister after all."

Yes. I searched for Lux's little sister, the civil official prospect student—Airi Arcadia, and came until the library inside the Academy's ground.

As expected, if it's his little sister than she definitely know something like his favorite food. That was what I thought, but—.

"It's true. It's no use even if I lie or anything. It feels like Nii-san kept saying delicious for most food in general since the past. But, rather than awfully luxurious food, I think Nii-san will like homely normal food better perhaps?"

".....Is, that so?"

I'm troubled by the bland reply of the little sister.

"Yes. That's why, Lisha-sama doesn't need to ask anyone further about this."

"Wha-.....!? I, it's not like I'm asking around at everyone you know!?"

I who got my motive found out by the little sister ran away as though escaping.

However, what to do?

If even the little sister doesn't know, doesn't that mean Lux doesn't really have anything he like or hate?

If that's the case, as expected those who already has prior experience in cooking like Krulcifer will be in a completely advantageous position—.

"Is it as I thought, that this is hopeless for me....."

After that too I asked around at several more people indirectly, but I didn't get any good information.

—

## Part 7

"—Yosh"

At the evening that day.

The time slot that has gone past the bath time where most of the students are sleeping.

I'm walking inside the quiet girl dormitory while following behind Lux's figure.

This method isn't really smart, but now that it has come to this, I can only ask Lux directly.

The truth is I want to practice cooking while keeping it a secret from Lux, but I have nowhere to go already.

And so, today I stop my daily Drag-Ride development and observed Lux's action.

"However, that guy is really doing any kind of request huh..... Even though the campus festival had just ended."

According to Lux, for the present his body fatigue's is recovered, so he wants to do various works while he can.

The requests from the female students ranged from something proper like consultation of what armaments to choose for their Drag-Ride or skill coaching, until a tea party under the name of life consultation.

Furthermore there were also things like consultation of picking clothes which obviously troubled Lux who is a male.

Things like carrying teaching materials from the Academy, helping with cleaning, paperwork sorting.

In addition he was also made to help with many works from dormitory side like picking up trash, managing material, and so on.

"Fuu, the requests for today are mostly finished now....."

Lux who came out from the public bath muttered that with a relieved face.

As expected from someone who has continued doing life of chores for five years, his work ethic is admirable.

(I've got to go easy a bit on him when I make a request too.....)

I'm thinking such thinking at the corner of my mind while resolving myself to talk to Lux, it was then—,

"Now then, I should start soon I guess."

Lux is starting to walk with a fast pace. I stopped the voice that almost comes out from my mouth.

Strange.

Even though he had just said that he has finished working, from his walking pace Lux is obviously not heading toward his personal room in the dormitory that has been newly assigned to him.

For a moment I was wondering if he is heading to the room of other woman, but unexpectedly his destination is the dining hall that is connected to the dormitory.

The time for dinner has finished a long time ago, the Academy's exclusive cooks has all left.

But, when I saw Lux opening the lock and entered inside the kitchen, it seems he has properly asked for permission.

(However, what is he going to do? Even though Lux has taken dinner already, and the requests for today should be finished—)



I too sneakily enter the dining hall so I don't get noticed and hide behind cover.

When I'm peeking at the situation with my heart pounding hard, Lux is lining up ingredients and taking a small pot into his hand.

He finely cut meat and onion, fry ingredients like mushroom with olive oil, add in some slight leftover soup, then he boil the pot further.

A nice scent is gradually drifting around. Even I gulp from smelling it.

Some time has passed since dinner. Normally I won't be that interested with more meal, but the aroma of spices is stimulating my appetite.

"It has been long time since I made it but, does it turn out well I wonder?"

Lux moved the content of the small pot onto a plate and begin eating.

He brought the spoon several times into his mouth to savor it slowly, and before long his expression burst into relieve.

"Yep. As I thought, my skill has decreased compared to when I was doing chores but—I think it will be all right if I practice a bit more."

After nodding in acceptance of something like that, Lux washed the pot and begins to tidy up the place.

"....."

Before Lux is returning this way, I quickly exited the dining hall.

And then, I mutter with conviction.

".....Finally, I did it."

I found it.

Lux was cooking alone late at night secretly from everyone and then eating it.

It's an action that is really unlike Lux, but exactly because of that there is no doubt about it.

That dish is exactly Lux's favorite food for sure.

It also fit with what his little sister said, 'a normal cooking that isn't extravagant'.

I withdraw for today with the memo of Lux's action and cooking procedure that I took as my prize.

And then, I consult my acquaintance about the cooking's name and the way to make it, and reproduce the menu.

It seems that it's a traditional stew cooking that has existed since the era of the old empire, so the cooking method isn't that difficult.

It will be standing out if the likes of me is practicing cooking with too much exaggeration, but at minimum I want to do better than Lux's own cooking.

(As I thought, here—I can only ask the master in the field.)

At holiday, I found an elderly cook who is taking out the trash and tried asking him resolutely.

"The trick to make brown stew you say? Ha-ha-ha. This work is really worth doing it huh, to be addressed directly by the princess like this."

"Enough, just teach me! I don't have much time.....after all I'm not good at cooking even at the best of times."

I pressed the cook who is laughing in amusement and convey my intention to practice cooking.

After I remind him to not tell anyone about this matter, I persuade the cook, and during several days, I'm learning how to cook brown stew that originated from the old empire era.

Making the soup from zero is something difficult for amateur, so I took some from the cooking at the daytime beforehand.

Lux was doing various things at night, so I made it every day by making time in early morning.

Although at the start there were a lot of hardships, my practice succeeded until the point where I can make one that is quite delicious.

"Oo, princess, your skill has improved. Now you can help out even at our dining hall without trouble. There is nothing that I need to teach you anymore."

"Isn't my skill nothing great at all!? Are you making fun of me!?"

When I spontaneously retort like that at the dining hall who is teaching me for a short while these days, the elderly man scratched his head with a troubled look.

"Oi oi, that's a misunderstanding. To improve the taste more than this will need more familiarity with the cooking in general and improving the skill in fine detail more. The Drag-Ride that princess and everyone else are riding is also like that right? Perhaps this too is a big matter for princess, but I'll get fired from my job by the guys above if I caused princess to even make light of this occupation."

The elderly cook stroked his beard while saying that in wry smile.

Even I understood and accepted it after hearing that.

".....I see. I guess. I'm indebted to you, thanks."

I accepted the cook's explanation and said my thanks before leaving.

Recently I was concentrating single-mindedly at cooking practice but, I also got a lot of things that I should do.

Here I should ask Lux to have a taste once without hesitating.

"Yosh!"

I fire up myself and prepare.

And then today, I'll make my challenge.

—

## Part 8

"Lux. That—tonight, there is something that I want to talk with you for a bit, do you have time?"

The curfew has passed, the dinner and bath time has also passed—the night.

I went to where Lux is cleaning the dormitory's public bath and said that to him.

"I'm fine with that. There is still a few requests left, so it will be a bit late but—will it be in Drag-Ride's atelier again?"

"N, no. Tha, that's—I'm all right with the late time. I'm also doing my own work for a bit. But, I want us meeting in your room....."

"My room....., is it? I understand. Then, I will go back right away after I finished up."

"Ah, yes..... Don't forget it."

Lux looked puzzled for a moment, but he immediately pulled himself together and smiled. Seeing that, I feel uneasy wondering if he already knows.

I'm not good with lying at this kind of time if I say so myself, but it can't be helped.

I resolved myself and finished up my work in the atelier. I already locked the place earlier than the appointment time and headed toward the dining hall.

I have taken permission so I open the door's lock and head inside the kitchen.

I have asked for soup leftover at afternoon, so what's left is only to make it like usual.

But—at that time, I can see faint light from inside.

I tilt my head in puzzlement at this unexpected situation. There, a single silhouette is standing.

"Eh? Lisha, sama?"

"Lux——.....wait, why are you here!? I haven't called you here!"

Yes. Lux who should be coming after I finished cooking is in the dining hall earlier than me for some reason.

What is the meaning of this.....?

"E, err, why is Lisha-sama in the kitchen too? I was sure that——"

"We, well fine. Anyway let's talk later."

After exchanging conversation that is strangely not meshing with each other, I enter the kitchen as planned and begin to cook stew following the procedure.

Lux too is starting to prepare some kind of food at the side. A few minutes later, he put it on plate and brings it to the table.

And then——.

"Err, this is.....the same thing, isn't it?"

".....Seems so."

Lux is making a really complicated expression. I too am responding with a perplexed face.

On the table are two plates of stew lining up, the contents' appearances have almost exactly the same coloring.

.....What's this?

Strange. How did it become like this.....?

Don't tell me, even Lux himself was practicing to make his own favorite food, such thing—.

"Oi, just what's the meaning of this? Why are you making the same thing like me here!?"

"E, err, that—it looks like Lisha-sama is overworking recently which make you hungry, and I was told that this dish is good for late night meal though....."

".....Wa, wait a second! Just why in the world you are thinking like that!?"

Seeing Lux making an awkward smile, I reflexively asked back.

"Err, everyone of the Triad told me, that Lisha-sama is interested with cooking—I was thinking to make something for you, but it has been a long time so I practiced for a bit."

"Are you an airhead-!?"

My goodness.

For him to simply think that I'm getting hungry just from the story that I'm harboring interest toward cooking.....

"Wait? That means, in the end this isn't your favorite food?"

"Ah, I believe that the taste properly turn out deliciously, so please don't worry."

"That's not it!? What I want to ask isn't that—"

Haa.....

Like that, strength left my body and I hung my head down. Seeing that Lux look my way and mutter with a serious face.

"Could it be, Lisha-sama made that for me?"

Stared by surprised eyes, I nodded a bit.

".....We, well, you too seem to start doing chores again, I thought that perhaps you will get hungry after your works."

Actually—I want to become able to make Lux's favorite food though.

I cannot say the truth from embarrassment and say a really doubtful lie.

"Thank you very much. I'm happy that Lisha-sama is concerned about me. Recently I'm busy with other chores, that even though I'm Lisha-sama's knight, I became slightly negligent in that role."

However, when he turn such straightforward smile toward me, my chest suddenly become warm inside and I reflexively averted my eyes.

"Err, we already made this, so won't Lisha-sama eat together with me before it get cold?"

While my body is shaking from the tantalized feeling, Lux said that to me with a troubled looking smile.

Reluctantly, I exchange my cooking with his and eat the stew.

The meat that dissolves into the soup, the flavor of the vegetable, and the aroma of spices that invite the appetite gives the dish a deep taste.

I believe I have been training quite a lot, but as expected, Lux's stew feel like it's slightly above mine in regard to his experience.

But, why is it I wonder.

Even though the dish that I cooked should be inferior to what Lux cooked himself, Lux is eating it with a smile.

Is it simply his consideration for me? Or else—.

Does my feeling, reaches him?



(Well, it's fine I guess. Something like this once in a while is also not bad.....)

My strategy failed, but just from seeing Lux eating my cooking happily, I can only stare at that with a blank mind as though I'm drunk.

"Still, I'll say this to correct you, it's not like I'm regularly feeling hungry, so I don't need any late-night snack."

"Eh.....!? I, is that so?"

Lux slightly showed a disappointed face at me who snapped a pointing finger at him, but this is a strategy.

If Lux is holding expectation to me for practice and Drag-Ride training too, then there is no way I can make light of that.

At the current time when Sacred Eclipse and danger to new kingdom are approaching, I have to give my all for the sake of fighting.

Even so—as expected I want to find a bit of free time, practice, and raise my skill in cooking to surpass Lux.

Because I want to be connected with Lux not just through battle and Drag-Ride, and not just with relationship as knight and princess.



"Just you wait in anticipation, Lux."

I talked with a tone that is filled with a bit of implication and declared that proudly.

Lux accepted it with a troubled smile.

".....I don't really understand but, I'm looking forward to it. Also, the meal today is delicious, Lisha-sama."

"Ua.....-, that.....right."

When I'm told such thing right from the front, I averted my face aside with a face that became heated and flashed red and muttered.

To feel happy from the bottom of my heart even though it's just flattery, I'm really simple.

—

But, seeing how I can feel completely satisfied with just those words and smile, perhaps the path for me to improve my skill is long.

# **Chapter 3: Krulcifer Chapter – Weak Point**

## Part 1

"—Err, is around here all right I wonder?"

Inside the ground of Academy at fort city Cross Field, night.

It was past curfew, in that time where originally people should be asleep, Lux was coming alone behind the school building where there was no sign of people.

It seemed the Lisha was working until late at night like usual, the atelier of Drag-Ride that could be seen at afar had small lighting leaking out from there.

Lux was waiting in that place following the instruction written in the request application.

Lux was busy because of the sudden turn since the campus festival, but because soon he would leave the Academy because of his duty, he wished to do the chores that the student requested him.

"But, as I thought this is strange huh.....?"

Lux was shivering from the chilly air of night at beginning of autumn while tilting his head and talked to himself.

One of the written requests that was handed to Lux the other day had this kind of content written in it.

—

【Working area】 Secret

【Client】 Secret

【Work description】 For the time being, please come to behind the school building when it's bedtime. I will talk about the work there.

Please, absolutely come without fail. If you run then I'll barge into your room.

—

Through his life of doing chores for five years, Lux had also received several outrageous requests.

A request from doctor to drink a medicine that was in the middle of development.

A work from the weak-minded father who requested Lux to scold his son whose age was twice that of Lux.

Requests like capturing fierce <sup>pet</sup>beast that escaped and so on, it still caused him to feel headache when he recalled them.

He firmly rejected A request from an artist that wanted him to get naked as model.

But, as expected, he couldn't really remember something like a request with the client's name and the job description obscured.

At the very least, this had never happened even once since he came to this Academy and started to specialize in receiving request.

(I thought that this might be a prank or some kind of mistake though—)

With the inadequate explanation in the written request, originally it should be fine even if he ignored this, but,

—

'Please, absolutely come without fail. If you run then I'll barge into your room.'

—

This part was strangely scary, so in the end Lux came here.

The possibility was low, but this might be a trap, so he was acting vigilant at minimum.

While he was standing quietly like that, before long the air behind him shook, \*rustle\* a small sound could be heard.

"Tha, thank you for waiting. You come here means that you accepted the request, right.....?"

"Ah, good evening."

When a girl in uniform appeared, Lux greeted with a smile.

The face of the girl whose hair hung down until her eyes looked a bit familiar.

Because her class was different from Lux, there really wasn't any point of contact between them, but she was a female student of the same year with him who was a civil official candidate.

Her name if he remember right was—,

"Err, I am, called.....Nina. There is something that I, earnestly, wish to consult with you about a request....."

It seemed that the girl had a shy character, she was taking off her gaze from Lux and muttered with halting tone.

Perhaps it was also because of her shyness that her request had nothing written on it.

(I'm glad. It looks like it's a normal request unlike what I thought.....)

Lux was relieved. He made a soft smile to reassure the girl and spoke.

"Yes. That's fine but this place is cold, so how about talking inside the dormitory? Also, if possible please write just what kind of request it is inside the request form beforehand—"

"Tha, that's no good-!"

The moment Lux asked, the girl's expression changed and her voice roughened.

"Thi, this is a secret request! Please don't mention it to anyone! The reason I'm calling you to this empty place is also because of that-.....!"

"E, err.....?"

While Lux was bewildered, the girl walked toward him as though to pressure him.

Flame of cornered emotion was smoldering from the gap of her front hair. The glint of her eyes looked vaguely dark.

The girl talked with a terribly tense aura overflowing from her like a person who hadn't drunk water for several days in the desert.

—

"I want you to teach me Krulcifer-san's weak point. That—is my request!"

—

".....Yes?"

Lux's mouth gaped open for a few seconds hearing that.

And then, the most bizarre odd job that Lux had ever received in the Academy began.

—



## Part 2

"Co, come to think of it, does Krulcifer-san has something that you are not good at?"

".....What's the matter, so suddenly? Lux-kun is asking something unusual that is unlike you isn't it?"

"N, no, just a bit, for some reason, that's....."

After school—at night after Lux finished his chores for the day, he was inside the library in the Academy.

He was there to receive supplementary lessons of class work from Krulcifer that was being done periodically.

Lux who enrolled into the Academy still wasn't able to completely follow the lesson's content.

He had no problem with reading and writing, and fundamental knowledge thanks to the education he received at his childhood when he was living in the imperial court, but as expected at present he was falling behind in regard to curriculum other than technology and knowledge that was related with Drag-Ride.

Of course, he received consideration from the Academy because he only enrolled from midway and he got treated appropriately, and in these few months he had mostly caught up, but sometimes he would be given study lesson like this by Krulcifer who boasted top grade in the Academy because he had no reason to refuse her good will.

He was also busy from his usual chores, so he also done his study in this time.

They would study in the dining hall, parlor, library, and so on. It would depend on the time and situation.

Lux tried to ask Krulcifer while he was receiving her supplementary lessons, but she easily avoided the question.

"For example, is there a subject that even Krulcifer is not good with—?"

"There is none. Although there is difference from my preference, but I don't think there is any subject where my grade drop because I'm not good with it."

"It is, isn't it....."

That prospect was cut down with a single stroke.

That was already obvious by the point of time she was able to teach her classmate Lux about all the subjects.

At the very least she had no weakness in regard of studying.

"Or perhaps—is there something in Lux-kun's mind about me? It's fine to tell me anything anytime if there is something that bothers you."

"Eh, no, that's not.....!"

Lux was startled when Krulcifer responded with a smile that was filled with deep meaning and probed back to him.

Due to the case of the campus festival and Sacred Eclipse the other day, a change also occurred in Lux's heart and he became somewhat conscious of the girls.

Thanks to that, his heart was beating even harder than before toward Krulcifer's inviting gesture.

He became unable to concentrate due to the good will that she directed toward him.

Originally, this should be a fun time even if it was somewhat embarrassing for him.

In spite of that, cold sweat was trickling on Lux's back.

"So, sorry. I'll concentrate properly so—"

Lux apologized in panic while pouring his attention at the book and paper in front of his eyes.

(Right now this is the limit of my effort.....)

His appeal toward Krulcifer was over already.

It would be great if 'that girl' could be convinced somehow with this but—.

"....."

He felt a sharp gaze like prickling needle from behind.

It wasn't just his imagination.

Since some time ago, he could see Nina's face from the reflection of the library window in front of him, where she was peeking his way from her cover behind a bookshelf.

"-.....!?"

Lux pretended not to notice that and he solved the question before his eyes.

(Really, just how did it become like this.....?)

He desperately concentrated in studying while recalling the happening just a day ago.

—

## Part 3

"Krulcifer-san's, weak point.....!?"

Inside the Academy's ground, behind the school building late at night.

In that place without any sign of other people, the second year girl student whose eyes were hidden by her front bang—Nina said such thing to him.

".....Yes. I don't care whether it's something that she hate no matter what or something that she is especially not good at. No matter what I wish you to teach me something that she will be troubled if it's known, a secret about her shortcoming."

Her voice was cornered and tense.

And then, an unusual tenacity could be felt from the fierce glint her eyes were emitting.

"Eerrr.....are you, saying that seriously?"

"What? Is it no good?"

"No, it's not that it's no good..... In the first place, why are you asking something like that?"

Krulcifer was an overseas student from Ymir Theocracy, but her pedigree was good and her grade was also great.

It was to the degree that she was standing out from the crowd even in this Academy.

That was why, no matter how good she was at dealing with things, it wasn't strange even if someone was jealous of her.

But, from how scared the girl before him looked like, somehow or other it didn't look like she was doing this because of resentment.

"That's—it's, e, errr, this is. I, it's something that is extremely hard to say but.....the, the poem that I composed.....something like that got seen. A, anyway, because my secret got exposed to her, I won't be able to feel relieved if I don't know some secret of hers too!"

The girl pointed up her finger with a snap looking terribly flustered.

(When I wondered what is this about, it's something like that.....)

Probably Krulcifer herself didn't pay that much attention about it.

"But, at the very least I don't know about any weakness of Krulcifer-san, I can't even imagine it."

Lux answered honestly like that.

Nina glared at Lux with a gaze as though she couldn't accept it.

"Then, please investigate it. I will also tried to look for it, but I didn't find anything at all..... If it's you who had even temporarily became lover with her, then perhaps you will notice something."

Even though she told him that, honestly this was troubling.

(About that lover thing, in the first place it was a request to fake that.....)

When doing chores, the thing that mustn't be done the most was a work that stepped into the territory of 'someone else other than that client' through that request.

It would be terrible if by doing his job seriously he was inviting unnecessary trouble instead.

Even if it didn't become like that, he couldn't do anything that would trouble his important friend Krulcifer.

That was why, he determined himself and refused.

"My bad, but I cannot accept that kind of request that will trouble other person like that. I will pretend to never hear this story, so if you can abandon

this pursuit from here——"

".....Then, it can't be helped, I will continue to investigate it by myself. I swear I will find it no matter what method I have to use. Even if I have to use a way that will be somewhat rough——"

"Eh.....!?"

The words of the girl who was clad in dark and muddy aura made Lux shudder.

"I, isn't that a bit bad, or I wish you will stop....."

He didn't know if Krulcifer really had a weakness.

But, he felt a bit uneasy to leave this cornered girl to act recklessly like this.

(This is bad, if I just leave her alone, and some kind of problem happen——)

The fretful Lux immediately thought of a method to follow up.

"H, hmmm..... That, you see. Can I ask you to promise me one thing?"

".....What is it?"

The girl directed her eyes that were shaded by dark shadow toward Lux and let out a cold voice.

"If I accept that request, you yourself won't do anything strange toward Krulcifer-san."

"Are you going to....., accept the request?"

"If I can, add some conditions to it, then I will."

Lux asked with a nervous look.

This query itself was half a gamble, but there was no other way.

".....Understood. Then, please do."

After staring unblinking at Lux, the girl sighed and nodded before long.

After that, they talked just for a bit, then Lux parted from the girl and returned to his room.

—

## Part 4

In the end, Lux exchanged several conditions with the girl while accepting the request.

The condition from Nina was for him to find Krulcifer's weak point within several days.

The condition from Lux was that Nina herself wouldn't attempt anything toward Krulcifer during that time.

And then, at the time Lux accomplished the request, she wouldn't make any request like this anymore, and she also wouldn't do anything rash toward Krulcifer.

"Fuu..... For the time being it's going well, is it?"

Lux was falling on the bed in his room and muttered with his gaze casted down.

His bargaining with the girl was far more tiring than the usual chores, but he managed to arrange an agreement with her.

Of course, he couldn't search for a weakness that Krulcifer herself seriously didn't want anyone to know, so he was thinking to look for some unserious weak point that he could pretend to be something that would satisfy the girl.

Next if he could get the girl to accept it after hearing the weakness, then this request would be over.

"A weak point of Krulcifer that can convince that girl....."

Although he said that, but in reality he had no prospect.

But, at this time Lux was thinking that there was no need to think hard about it.



"....."

He was gradually pressed by the heavy weight that was his sleepiness and he accepted the sensation of his body sinking onto the bed.

Like that Lux's consciousness became distant in the blink of eye.

—

## Part 5

The next day was class work like usual.

Lux woke up early at the morning, headed to the washroom, washed his face and changed into his uniform.

The chores at early morning were divided into several pattern types.

The work today was the cleaning up of the Academy ground.

He would clean up the surrounding of atelier, so he went to the kitchen to ask for tea which he would bring when going to wake up Lisha too while he was at it.

After making small talk with the waking up Lisha, Lux finished the cleanup of the surrounding and headed to the dining hall to take breakfast—.

"Ah.....!"

He noticed the existence of a girl in the corner of the dining hall—Nina, and he recalled.

'Please find Krulcifer-san's weak point quickly'

Such insistence was emitted as aura that oozed out from her whole body.

Lux was startled inside his heart while heading to where Krulcifer was at inside the dining hall.

She had started eating breakfast already, but her hands stopped when her eyes met Lux's, and she smiled to him with an expression that was filled with deep affection.

"Good morning. You are early today too."

"Krulcifer-san too. E, err, speaking of that, don't you feel hard, waking up early in the morning?"

Pressured by the client girl's urging, Lux quickly attempted his probing.

Feeling weak at the morning.

If he could Nina to recognize even something at that level as weakness then it would be fine, but—.

"It's not a problem. When I was at Ymir Theocracy, I had to wake up even earlier and pray, so it has become a habit to wake up early since my childhood. This academy feels relaxing instead for me."

"Ah, i, is that so....."

His first attempt failed.

(Well, I somehow know that from seeing how she is coming among the first people here at breakfast time, but—)

Lux's eyes darted toward the corner of the dining hall once more.

As expected, the girl called Nina was looking at Lux with a dissatisfied expression.

"Co, come to think of it, Krulcifer-san you, is there any food that you cannot eat? The food in this dining hall is always delicious, but at Ymir Theocracy—"

"I have nothing I like or hate. Naturally I have some degree of preference, but I have no experience meeting a cooking that I cannot eat no matter what, I also have never experienced feeling disgusted from seeing the food's appearance or aroma."

"I, I see.....that's amazing, Krulcifer-san."

He failed again.

It seemed there was no more weak point that he could probe in this meal time.

With breakfast tray in hands, Lux sat in front of Krulcifer once more and he also took his meal.

Regarding the skill in cooking too, rather than Lux who had experience doing odd jobs at bar or restaurant, Krulcifer was the one more skilled. It was already proved at the training camp in summer.

Her elegant table manner that didn't make a sound while eating also looked perfect from Lux's point of view.

By no meant she came here the first thing after waking up, her uniform and hair weren't disheveled at all.

(Or rather, at that time I lost against that girl's momentum and promised her without any consideration but..... Could it be, searching for Krulcifer-san's weak point is actually a terribly difficult thi—)

Noticing that fact, Lux felt astonished inside his heart, it was then—,

"Lux-kun."

"Eh—?"

Krulcifer who was sitting at his opposite suddenly lifted up her waist and leaned forward. Her face was coming closer to him.

Her looks were beautiful, like a fairy in fantasy.

Seeing it coming right in front of his gaze, he felt startled reflexively.

"It's a bit dirty there, look."

Quietly, the napkin in Krulcifer's hand gently wiped Lux's mouth.

The remains of red tomato sauce that was used in the breakfast was attached there.

"Ah, that....., thank you."

Lux spontaneously turned red faced from embarrassment. Krulcifer smiled with her usual cool expression.

"It's fine to think, but it's better to relax at least when in the middle of eating. I understand that Lux-kun is busy, but sometimes you will blunder at such thing you know?"

".....Ah, yes. I'll be careful."

Lux replied while feeling abashed.

(Wait, far from finding weakness. It's me who got followed up by Krulcifer-san!?)

In addition, he even almost got seen through about what he was thinking.

(Perhaps this is really bad.....)

The instinct of Lux who had accomplished many requests until now told him the sign of a protracted battle.

Or perhaps, this request might end up to be one of the rare requests that were impossible to accomplish—but.

"....."

From behind, the girl whose eyes were hidden by her front hair—the girl client Nina was gazing at him.

(Can I really do this? Soemthing like finding Krulcifer-san's weak point within a few days—)

Lux hung his head down while slipping out a small sigh.

He was feeling the premonition of a long battle.

—

## Part 6

"Say, can I ask you to find her weakness quickly.....?"

The third day after he accepted the request, lunch break.

Lux shook off the invitation of the girls who invited him to take lunch together and came to behind the school building where there wasn't any sign of people.

The one who called Lux here with the same letter without any sender's name was the aforementioned Nina.

Her business was just as he expected, about the matter of 'Krulcifer's weak point' search that she requested.

At first, Lux intended to find something that Krulcifer wasn't good at which wouldn't bring any trouble even if it became known, and used that to tell the girl and convince her.

But, when he actually tried it, he noticed that this request was quite an impossible problem.

Class work, hand-to-hand combat, Drag-Ride, things related to strength, then her conduct and personal grooming as noble, things related to private life, Krulcifer didn't show any opening at all in those things.

It didn't even seem like there was any food or animal that she was weak against.

"Sorry. It's harder to find it than I thought. If you can wait just for a bit more——"

".....Tomorrow. Because I won't be in the Academy then."

"Eh?"

Lux was surprised hearing the topic suddenly changed.

"The students who are civil official candidate will have social field trip class in the second block, so tomorrow I won't be in the Academy."

The girl continued with a faintly dark tone while anger and uneasiness spread out from her.

"If we don't hurry, the content of the poem might get spread. Please find it before I return. If you cannot, I can only make direct attempt at Krulcifer next."

"A, attempt you say, what are you planning to do?"

"I have no obligation to tell you who isn't accomplishing your task....."

"I, I got it. I'll find it out somehow, so——"

Lux soothed the girl who was clad with dark atmosphere while saying that and somehow got her to accept it.

"Haa..... I guess I'll meet Krulcifer-san once more."

After bidding farewell from the girl client, Lux whispered that with a weary face, it was then——,

"My, does Lux-kun have business with me?"

"Uwaaah.....!? Wait, Kru, Krulcifer-san-!?"

Lux jumped on the spot when a voice suddenly addressed him from behind.

Right now it was after school, so he never expected that there would be anyone behind him from the corridor.

"It's upsetting that Lux-kun is so shocked like that. What's more, you were sighing like that even though you are going to meet me——Lux-kun is horrible."

Krulcifer teased him with a jesting smile.

"Ah, so, sorry. Err, but I don't feel reluctant or anything to meet Krulcifer-san, there is a bit of situation——"

When Lux tried to explain in panic, Krulcifer chuckled,

"You are feeling awkward to search for my weak point—is that it?"

"Eh.....!?"

Krulcifer guessed Lux's worry right on the mark.

"Wa, wait a second. In the first place I——"

"It's okay if Lux-kun keep the request's detail a secret. I only accidentally heard when the girl just now was accosting you willfully. If it's like that then it's not a problem right?"

"....."

He was completely seen through.

Surely Krulcifer guessed that something happened from Lux's action these several days and secretly followed him behind.

It was bad that it got exposed, but he also felt relieved somewhere inside.

"It looks like it's a request from a civil official candidate girl from the neighboring class isn't it? But well, seeing that I have an idea what is this about, it's difficult for me to act as complete victim here."

"In the end, just what happened?"

"That girl dropped her poems collection before. I only mistook it as some kind of documents and gave it a brief look. I promised not to tell anyone, but it looks like she cannot be convinced with that."

"Sorry..... It's, that girl looked really menacing, so rather than rejecting her request, I thought that I could do something somehow if I got in between——"



After Lux explained the circumstance, Krulcifer sent Lux an exasperated fixed stare.

"Lux-kun, please reflect on yourself slightly. There is no way that you who don't really understand woman's heart can possibly do something like mediating the conflict between girls skillfully, right?"

"That's cruel-!?"

It was right on the mark, so her words stabbed his heart deeply.

"Surely this is mostly because Lux-kun is being unable to overlook a problem that is right before your eyes, just like usual. But doing this isn't good. At the very least, a problem that occurred from that girl's own emotion isn't something you should undertake as an official request."

"That's——"

Perhaps it was just as Krulcifer said.

He thought of intermediating between the female student called Nina who made request to him and also Krulcifer so that she wouldn't be harmed, but the result became complicated instead.

"......I'm sorry, Krulcifer-san. This is my bad."

Lux hung his head down while muttering that. Krulcifer softly caressed Lux's hair seeing him like that.

"It seems you are reflecting already, so how about we discuss how to solve this trouble? Also, it's belated but I should say my thanks to you. Thank you for feeling concerned about me. —I'm really happy."

Her gentle voice and warm gaze caused Lux's heart to skip a beat.

Krulcifer usually showed a cool-looking smile, but when she showed him this kind of smile that was filled with deep affection, he felt that she was unbearably lovely.

(Wait, what am I thinking!? Right now we've got to discuss properly about this request.....)

Lux suppressed the loud beating of his heart and straightened his back.

"E, err, then what should we do? At this rate it looks like it's impossible to search for Krulcifer-san's weak point, when that girl came back tomorrow, should I try telling her directly?"

"Let's see. What to do about this I wonder? Certainly, it doesn't seem like I have a weak point that I will feel troubled if it get exposed but still in the level that can be told to other people."

Krulcifer put her hand on her chin and made a thinking gesture.

There was no way they could tell the girl about the secret of Krulcifer's origin that was from Ruin, but it seemed nothing come to mind other than that.

"Let's see—. Then, perhaps it will be interesting to test it."

But, suddenly she began to stare seriously on the face of Lux who was beside her—at the end she let a chuckle slipped out and smiled.

"Come to think of it that girl, she said that tomorrow she will go outside for social study. Then, can I ask you to help me for the whole day tomorrow, to search for my weak point—"

".....Eh?"

Lux stared in puzzlement. Krulcifer returned a smile filled with implication toward him.

And then the next day, the search for Krulcifer's weak point started, just as the original request demanded.

—

## Part 7

—Inside the parlor when it was lunch break, a quiet sound could be heard.

Originally the room was for the use of guest and it was prohibited to use it, but in order to avoid the gaze of the other girls, Lux used the remaining time after finishing a cleaning request to spend time together with Krulcifer there.

"Yes, with this it's check. Do you have any move left?"

"I'm beaten....."

'Haa', Lux hung his head down in surrender.

"Fuu, it's unfortunate. This time we don't find my weakness."

"A,ahaha....."

Lux responded with a wry smile at Krulcifer's words.

In order to search for her weak point, for the time being they began to think about various situations—which even included things like game and liking.

'I intend to look at myself objectively, but perhaps there are things that I actually don't notice.'

Because of that, fundamentally this strategy was Krulcifer doing absolutely anything that came to her mind while Lux took the role of being her opponent.

An objective point of view and an opponent for comparison were needed.

By doing that, a new weak point might surfaced, but to be defeated until this much, Lux's heart was in the verge of breaking.

"Even like this, I've played this game more or less from accompanying people through my chores, but....."

Lux tidied up the chess board and pieces while sighing.

It was as though Lux wasn't a match at all against her in games like chess or darts.

Krulcifer had no opening even at games.

"But, if Krulcifer-san has no weak point even in game, then perhaps it's no good already....."

"My, have you given up already? It's fine to change your view point when you are cornered. For example—there is also something like weak point in body."

"Wea, weak point in body.....wait, don't tell me——?"

Hearing what she said, Lux observed Krulcifer.

Her beautifully well-ordered features, her body line that while slender was drawing a feminine curve.

The uniform that really looked good on her, and the breasts that were pushing up just slightly—.

".....Lux-kun. Where are you looking at me right now? I absolutely won't get angry so can you tell me honestly?"

She was absolutely lying.

The proof was how it was only Krulcifer's eyes that weren't smiling.

"I, I'm not——!? Or rather, I still haven't think anything yet you know?"

"It's fine, just try to say it. You were looking on my chest anyway right?"

"N, no well.....that"

"I see. Thank you for speaking honestly. By the way it's a completely unrelated talk but, I'll give three times more homework than usual in the lessons I'll be giving Lux-kun tonight."

"Even though you said that you won't get angry-!?"

"Yes, I said that I won't get angry, however I didn't say that I won't retaliate at Lux-kun that is completely unrelated with it."

"Isn't that unfair!?"

When Lux yelled with teary eyes, Krulcifer brushed up her hair coolly.

"I guess. Then, I'll forgive you Lux-kun if you teach me a weakness of yours in exchange."

She brought her face closer and smiled, looking like she was enjoying it somewhat.

Honestly, it was really embarrassing to speak about his weakness from his own mouth but, it couldn't be helped.

"I, I get it. Then that, a weakness that I'm aware of is——.....-!?"

Lux determined himself and took a deep breath before opening his mouth. Then Krulcifer's index finger gently touched Lux's lips.

"It's fine to stop there. I was just joking."

He was stopped along with a mischievous smile from her.

"More importantly, you shouldn't talk about your own weakness to other people that easily. You are too honest about your weakness to those you aren't on guard against. I'm worried, so be careful. From here on, we don't know what kind of dangerous duty you will challenge."

"....."

He was completely dancing on the palm of her hands.

Besides—she noticed.

This clever and discerning girl seemed to have vaguely guessed about that matter too from Lux's condition these few days.

"Wait, it doesn't matter about my weakness! In the end Krulcifer-san's weakness——"

"I guess. Based from what I know there is none, but as I thought searching weak point of the body will be a nice point of view. Like being weak to tickles, or having stiff body, there are also things like that right?"

"Ah....."

Unexpectedly that might be a blindspot.

If Krulcifer was abnormally weak against tickling, for a perfect girl like her, certainly that might be an interesting 'weak point'.

"Then——want to try it?"

Krulcifer softly brushed up her hair and presented her ear to him.

Krulcifer's ear that normally was hidden behind her long hair.

Lux noticed a bit late about the meaning of her gesture that was exposing her ear.

"E, eeh!? Co, could it be I'll be the one touching it!?"

"What are you getting surprised about? It's meaningless even if I touch it myself right? .....Aa, could it be, that Lux-kun want to try touching another place more?"

Suddenly Krulcifer made a mischievous smile.

(Another place, don't tell me——)

The moment Lux's heart skipped a beat,

".....I'm sorry that I make you having hope."

"I don't!? Just what kind of person do you think I am!?"

"This is Lux-kun we are talking about, so surely you are thinking about things like wanting to touch my breasts that are only slightly modest, or putting your hand between my thighs, right?"

"No, I'm telling you I still haven't thought anything yet!? I was just surprised!"

"But, right now the sun is still high in the sky, and here is inside the school building, so let's stop it? And—you won't give it a try?"

"....."

Lux quietly reached out his hand beside Krulcifer's provocative face.

And then, he slowly touched that nicely shaped earlobe.

"Ah....."

Instantly, Krulcifer let a faintly surprised and muffled voice slipped out.

(I never really have the chance to touch a girl's ear even at my childhood, but—)

The surface was lustrous and squishy, giving a pleasant elasticity, pushing back on Lux's finger.

The terribly flaky spot within Krulcifer who possessed flawless ability somehow made his heart beat fast.

"A, are you all right, Krulcifer-san?"

".....Ye, yes, I'm fine. I, I don't mind even if you do it stronger."

"Ri, right....."

Lux did as Krulcifer pointed out and put a bit more strength into his fingertips.

Within the soft texture, there was firm hardness that was like a core.

"Hah....., a, aah..... A, as expected, it's really ticklish isn't it....."

(So, somehow, it feels like it will be bad to continue this-.....!)

The sigh of the girl that had vague sweetness mixed in it attacked Lux with strange impulse.

"Le, let's stop here! That——, it doesn't look like this is a weak point that is that easy to understand!"

".....That, might be so. It's unfortunate. That we cannot find it again."

"A, ahaha....."

That was dangerous.

Lux who almost got his reasoning melted with just a bit more let out a relieved sigh inside his heart while he patted his chest.

—

Even after that they continued to search for weak point, but they didn't find anything even until the sun finally went down.

—



## Part 8

"Haa....., in the end we cannot anything that seem like the right one."

After dinner.

Lux and Krulcifer were discussing on the table of the library just before the time for light out.

This time they were testing for weak point of girls that Lux knew—, for example things like dark place or high place, but none of them appeared that they could be called as Krulcifer's weak point.

Finally Lux too was completely exhausted and thought that they had exhausted all options, but—.

"—Come to think of it, it's strange."

"Eh.....?"

Krulcifer suddenly tilted her head with her eyes still fixed on a book's page.



"Why is that girl getting so scared like that? Certainly getting poems of her own making seen by other people might be embarrassing, but it's curious that she is getting that fixated just because other person saw them."

"Isn't she just that kind of type....."

Lux smiled wryly while recalling the girl client.

"Eh? Wait——?"

At first she didn't say anything, but when he pressed her for the second time, that girl—if he remembered correctly the girl said 'If we don't hurry, the content of the poem might get spread'.

When Lux told Krulcifer about it,

"It might be nothing, but that's a bit curious. Come to think of it—the content of the girl's poems was regarding romance. If I remember correctly, there were lines like the guidance of white lily, or the sublime tone something, or devoting the feeling....."

"I, I get the feeling that it will be better to not recall it in that much detail though——"

"......I see, so it was something like that."

When Lux tried to stop Krulcifer in hurry, she let out a light sigh.

"Did you understand something!?"

"Yes, somehow but, I believe that I'm not mistaken. Lux-kun, you don't need to do anymore work for this request. I will talk to her by myself."

"......"

Krulcifer only said that and stood up from her seat, then she left the library.

After that there was only Lux left to stand alone there with his mouth gaping open.



## Part 9

And then the next morning.

Lux was filled with trepidation inside his heart wondering how the girl client Nina would make her move, but that day a sheet of request form came to Lux unexpectedly.

【Work description】 I'm withdrawing my request, thank you very much.

The content consisted of only that sentence.

"—And then, in the end what happened?"

"It's nothing really complicated. I only talked directly with her and solved the misunderstanding."

Krulcifer said smoothly, but he wondered if the girl client who looked that cornered would be so easily persuaded like that.

"....."

"Are you unable to believe me that much?"

"N, no, it's not that I cannot trust Krulcifer-san, that's....."

"The love poem that the girl wrote was for a senior in this Academy. The content was suggestive, so the girl thought that it would be bad if by any chance the person the poem was directed at noticed it, that was why she panicked."

"Eh.....!? Wa, wait a second Krulcifer-san. You said it was for a senior in this Academy—don't tell me"

There should be no male student other than Lux here.

When Lux almost said it reflexively, Krulcifer brushed up her hair coolly.

"Basically, in a girl academy where males are forbidden to enter, occasionally a girl who harbored that kind of feeling will appear. Especially here where there are a lot of gallant girls."

"I, is that so....."

It was an unexpected story, but it felt like it would be better to not get deeply involved with it so Lux stopped pursuing further.

"I told her that I noticed the content of her poems that I picked up. And then, I promised her that I wouldn't talk about her poem to other people, that's all. As long as her anxiety of 'perhaps I got found out', 'she might be telling others even now' is just removed, then she won't try to do anything anymore."

"So, she was persuaded like that."

"Yes. But, in exchange I also told her one of my secrets as compensation. —It's a secret about love just like hers."

"—Eh?"

Lux raised his voice in respond to Krulcifer's words that she said with a smile of implication.

"Co, could it be, even Krulcifer-san, is also harboring feeling toward that senior—?"

".....Haah"

Krulcifer came to a stop and sighed in respond to Lux's question. She directed an exasperated fixed stare toward him.

"Lux-kun, let's start our usual supplementary lesson soon. Today it will be triple than normal."

"Eeeh.....!?"

Lux cowered in fright at Krulcifer's sudden declaration.

".....Even so, I'm finally aware of my own weak point."

Krulfifer quietly muttered beside Lux who was preparing ink and pen in resignation.

"Eh.....?"

When Lux tilted his head, the flawless girl smiled and said.

"It's how I don't want to show any weakness at all toward someone who I'm wishing that he will look at myself."

# **Chapter 4: Philuffy Chapter – The Work of Aingram Company**



## Part 1

During Lux's seventeen years of life, the place he woke up at had changed many times.

At his childhood it was at the imperial court in the capital.

At the period of his chores livelihood, it would be wherever he was working at the time.

Since around half a year ago, it was at the Academy of Cross Field.

And then right now—he woke up inside an unfamiliar mansion.

"N, nn.....?"

Lux rubbed his sleepy eyes while slowly lifting up his upper body.

"Eh.....? This place——?"

He was sleeping on an extravagant bed with canopy attached.

There wasn't a single stain on the white ceiling, the wooden furniture that was emitting smooth coffee colored luster was lined up inside the spacious room systematically.

The lamp that was decorated with glasswork and the soft and fluffy texture of the feather filled blanket comforter felt very luxurious. Just a glance was enough to tell that it took a lot of money for everything in this room.

From the light shining in through the curtain's gap, most likely the time was early morning.

But, even though it was a place that he was seeing for the first time, there was a vaguely nostalgic scent.

"——Wait, really, just where is here!?"

Lux was looking dazed, but right after that he instantly yelled a beat later.

The clothes he was wearing consisted of only thin sleep-wear.

He remembered as far as yesterday where he was made to accompany the headmaster, Relie to drink alcohol, but he had no memory of after that at all.

"Just, what happened to me.....?"

A strong anxiety was welling up inside him from this baffling situation.

When he searched nearby, even his Sword Devices of Wyvern and Bahamut weren't there.

Could it be, when he was going back from the headmaster office to his room, he was kidnapped by bandit?

If this was the work of Dragon Marauder than this was bad.

Nervousness ran through Lux's expression.

If Lux was kidnapped, then perhaps danger was also approaching everyone in the Academy.

"I have to grasp the situation as soon as possible and escape from here——"

Lux took a deep breath and he was going to stand up, his hand went down to push on the bed, at that moment——,

"Nn....."

\*Munyu\*

"E, h.....?"

A sensation that was different from before caused Lux to tilt his head.

The sensation was a little bit different from the soft comforter and bed sheet.

Inside the softness where his fingers were sinking into, lustrous elasticity and warmth could be felt.

Lux who was still a bit addled from sleepiness moved his fingers following his instinct, massaging that pleasant texture—,

"Nn. Kuu..... Lu.....chan."

".....Wait, uwaaaah!?"

The muffled voice came out from under the comforter. Lux instantly leaped up.

His movement flipped up the comforter where the face of a girl who was letting out sleeper breathing happily showed up from under.

"Wh, why is Philuffy here!? Or rather, just now was as I thought—"

Lux's face was reddening from the sensation of breast that was still remaining on his hand while confirming that.

The girl who was his childhood friend with soft looking hair that was faintly pink colored.

Her innocent looks that still had a vestige of immaturity in it, combined with her heavy breasts that proclaimed their existence vividly let out a sex appeal that vaguely felt immoral.

Furthermore the smooth curve of skin peeking out from the underwear coupled with her scent that was like sweet milk caused Lux's heart to jump immediately and it began to pound hard inside his chest.



"Be, besides, why is she in her underwear.....-!?"

Lux couldn't look straight at that appearance that was too provocative and he immediately averted his gaze.

He was more or less also similarly wearing sleep-wear, but different from Lux, Philuffy's appearance was completely just in her underwear.

Thin strings was caught on her shoulders that connected to a pure white bustier.

Every part was so thin they looked transparent. Black ribbon was mixed as decoration that brought about elegance, making her seductive limbs that were already fascinating even under normal circumstance to be even more charming.

In addition there was no skirt part, so she was totally exposed until her panty at her lower body.

The black negligee that he once saw when they were sharing the same room previously gave a slightly adult allure, but this one was also amazing in a different sense.

With her wearing only underwear with adorable ornament, it instead brought about an unbalanced indecent feeling.

"-.....!?"

\*Zzz, zzz\*. Philuffy's voluptuous breasts were quietly moving up and down in conjunction with her quiet breathing. Seeing that Lux's throat suddenly felt dry and a ticklish impulse was welling up inside him.

Although, with the unknown situation they were placed at, there was also no way he could keep averting his eyes like this and let her sleep.

"Tha, that, Phi-chan. Come on, wake up——"

Lux gently reached out his hand to her shoulder and lightly shook his childhood friend's body.

He was averting his gaze so that he didn't directly see her underwear figure, but honestly it felt like he would lose control.

".....Nn. Eh? .....Lu, chan?"

While he was shaking her repeatedly through his reasoning that almost ruptured, Philuffy finally opened her eyes faintly.

Because she had just woken up, her eyes looked sleepier than usual. She rubbed her eyes and Lux was reflected onto those eyes.

"He, hey Phi-chan. Even I don't understand what kind of situation we are in right now—. That's why, this is, it's not like I did anything strange....."

The present situation where they were sleeping on the same bed, while on the other hand it was only Philuffy who was in underwear appearance caused Lux to be flustered, thinking hard about how to explain it, but—,

"Zzz....."

"Just wait a second!? Don't sleep again in this situation okay!?"

Lux spontaneously retorted seeing Philuffy closing her eyes once more.

She was defenseless, being in her own pace too much as always. It seemed that she wasn't concerned even if she was on the same bed with Lux.

He was happy that she was trusting him, but right now it wasn't time for that.

For now he had to wake her up somehow and asked her what was going on.....!

"Phi-chan, wake up!? There is still something I want to ask—"

When Lux shook her body earnestly once more, she finally got up slowly while rubbing her eye.

"Fuaaa..... .....Lu-chan, why are you here?"

"It's me who want to ask that-!?"

Lux spontaneously retorted with a loud voice. Then \*knock knock\*, a knocking sound suddenly came from behind.

"I'm coming in, you two——"

"Eh, wait-.....!?"

The room's door opened without even any time for Lux to reply.

The one who showed her appearance wearing a personal clothes with stylish coloring was the headmaster of the Academy, a woman of blooming age who was also Philuffy's big sister, Relie Aingram.

"Wait, Relie-san!? Why are you here.....-!?"

Lux's words that he was going to say stopped in the middle.

It was because he suspected something after seeing Relie's expression that was showing smile that was like a little devil.

"Don't tell me this is, everything is Relie-san's——"

"My my? I wonder what you are talking about. Lux-kun has properly agreed with me last night to come here. I said it right? Itold you 'I'm going to go to the next block for a bit of work, so won't Lux-kun accompany me too for studying?'."

"Aa....."

The special mission that the captain of Seven Dragon Paladins, Magialca gave him, 'the search for traitor'.

When he infiltrated Heiburg Republic to carry out his investigation, he would disguise himself as a merchant who specialized in importation. Because of that, this time he would learn how to act befitting his role by accompanying Relie in her work——, but.

(Why am I even sleeping together with Phi-chan?)

Even though yesterday Lux should be drinking juice while accompanying Relie in drinking alcohol last night.

Thinking back now, was alcohol slipped into his drink that time?

This kind of 'prank' was an everyday thing for Relie, but it was really something unthinkable to be done by a headmaster.

"More importantly, will the Academy be alright?"

Today and tomorrow the class would be suspended because of national holiday, but wouldn't everyone become worried if he was gone from the dormitory suddenly?

"This place is a villa of Aingram house located in the first block of Cross Field. I have left behind note about our outing so there won't be any problem but—there was a bit of trouble."

Relie brushed her front hair as though to say 'good <sup>yare</sup>grief<sup>yare</sup>' while showing a wry smile.

"That girl whose admission procedure is being processed—. That girl called Yoruka was sharp sighted, she showed up in front of us who were carrying the sleeping Lux-kun you see. I was misunderstood that I was going to kidnap Lux-kun, it took some time to persuade her."

".....Err, it's a fact that I was kidnapped isn't it?"

Lux first retort at that part with a conflicted face, then he thought of something.

"But—it's amazing that she allowed Relie-san to take me away."

Based from Yoruka's personality, he thought that at the very least she would come along here even if she had to force it, and yet...

"Yes, she was worried about your well being and wouldn't fold at all. So I also thought of various ideas."



Relie said that while looking at Philuffy who was still in a daze with a smile.

"When I told her that in order to create an heir, Lux and Phi will need time to be alone with just the two of them, she cheerfully consented."

"Please don't persuade her with outrageous reason as you please like that-!?"

"My? Is there any problem with that?"

When Relie replied with a serious face, Lux hung his head down.

"What kind of excuse I should make to her when I return to the Academy.....!?"

"That was why I properly prepared a situation like this where such thing can naturally happen easily don't you see? Aa, it's regrettable, even though if I knocked the door a bit later, there might be no need to make any excuse."

Relie wriggled her body, seemingly immersing herself into some kind of delusion by herself.

"....."

Perhaps he should say just as expected, it appeared Relie was the mastermind who made him slept with Philuffy.

"Relie-sama. It will be time for breakfast soon."

The door was knocked once more and this time a clear voice of a young woman came in.

Most likely she was one of the servants of Aingram house.

"Yes yes, we will go there right away. Then Lux-kun, the clothes are put inside the closet, so wake up Phi properly and come down together okay?"

"Wa, wait a second please!? That, at the very least even if just Philuffy's appearance——"

Although Lux yelled reflexively, Relie went out of the room as though she didn't hear anything.

After that there was only Lux and Philuffy who was still in a daze sleepily who were left behind.

"Nn, eh.....?"

It seemed that Philuffy's consciousness was finally awakened, she looked at Lux's face in wonder and tilted her head.

"Ah, e, eerr, that's, Philuffy. This is, there is a bit of circumstance——"

".....That's, wrong."

"Eh?"

Philuffy suddenly put her index finger on Lux's lips and brought her face close to him seriously. Her cheeks were puffed up slightly.

"When calling me, it's Phi-chan. Right?"

Rather than the situation of her sleeping together with Lux with her appearance was only wearing underwear on bed, she didn't pay that any mind and said that instead with a pure expression.

Being approached until near proximity like this also brought that childishly cute face and big breasts until right before Lux's eyes. His cheeks spontaneously reddened.

"Ah, so, sorry. That's, go, good morning. Phi-chan."

Philuffy's usual expressionless look slightly loosened from hearing Lux's words and her lips slackened.

"Yep. Morning, Lu-chan."

In the end, it appeared Philuffy was at her own pace as usual.

Lux averted his gaze in panic and turned his back on her while changing his clothes so he wouldn't look at Philuffy's underwear appearance as much as possible. Then they went down to the mansion's first floor.

—

## Part 2

"About that, today I'm thinking to go around visiting several trade partners that are close to our company in work."

At breakfast table.

Relie suddenly said such thing inside the spacious living room where the lined up furniture was emitting beautiful luster.

On the vertically long table, dishes that seemed to be cooked by exclusive cook were lined up until the table was cramped.

Freshly baked pan with herb kneaded into it, sunny-side-up fried eggs accompanied with fatty bacon, salad with oil and lemon juice as its dressing, potage of potato, orange and raspberry jam.

And then there was even dessert that was cooked with pear syrup.

Lux thought that the breakfast that could be eaten in the Academy's dining hall was also quiet substantial, but this breakfast was even more extravagant.

From the point of view of Lux who had gone through a period of life of chores, this menu really wasn't something to be eaten as breakfast.

Perhaps here he should say that, as expected from the daily life of Aingram conglomerate.

"Today we have to get out of the villa soon, so the menu this morning is a moderate one."

Lux was dumbfounded at what Relie told him smoothly while eating the breakfast.

By the way here—this villa with size that might be five times the normal house seemed to be the house Relie used when she was staying in Cross Field.

Every single one of the dishes that were created by Aingram's exclusive cook was amazingly delicious.

"In the end, what are we going to do this time?"

"You will become attendant of my work. The Academy is procuring various things from a large shop at the third block, so we mainly will come there and have business discussion with the trade partner. At the end of our schedule, there will be a dining together with some big-wigs."

Relie took out a notebook from her pocket and read it up smoothly.

A woman who seemed to be a secretary was standing some distance away from the table, but it seemed Relie was the type who didn't leave everything to other people and grasped the situation by herself.

"This is also just the right timing to make Phi learn the work as my secretary and bodyguard. I will teach Lux-kun about merchant while also evaluating Phi's work."

Here the reason why even Philuffy was accompanying them was finally made clear.

"I, is that so.....?"

Lux responded while sending his gaze toward Philuffy who was eating breakfast silently. Her expressionless face gave a brief nod.

(Work as Relie-san's secretary, and bodyguard.....)

Relie had the position as the heiress of a large conglomerate that was controlling several companies, she had a lot of enemy everywhere.

Philuffy was first class as a Drag-Ride, and she was also learning martial art, so she also excelled in self-defense technique.

Based from her ability, it could be said that no one was more suitable than her for the bodyguard role, but she had a bit of problem for secretary work.

Would she really be all right.....?

Lux glanced to the side at Philuffy who was looking as though she got no motivation at all while finishing a lot of breakfast.

—

## Part 3

It seemed there were seven places where business discussion with trade partner would be held even just for today.

After they finished eating, they immediately dressed up themselves for the outing.

Lux returned to the guest room at the second floor and prepared by stuffing things like water bottle and general goods the servants prepared for him into a small backpack.

Relie had prepared a dress suit exclusive for Lux with his measurement that was unknown when it was taken, so he borrowed a different room that differed from Philuffy and changed clothes there.

"Somehow, it has been a long time since I'm wearing this kind of clothes even when it's a holiday....."

Lux was looking at the mirror while feeling anxious whether he had dressed himself correctly or not, then—,

"Lu-chan, you there?"

The door knob was turned \*click\* and Philuffy suddenly entered inside.

"Uwah!? Phi, Phi-chan!? What are you doing!?"

"I just want to ask a bit, though?"

She tilted her head slightly with her usual absentminded expressionless face.

"Wait, not that, I'm still in the middle of changing here!"

".....I, don't mind you know?"

"Be mindful there! I won't take long so wait a bit!"

He was relieved that at least even Philuffy herself also wasn't in the middle of changing, but like this it was meaningless for him to ask for a different room to change.

"....."

Overwhelmed by the presence of the girl who was making her displeasure known wordlessly, Lux quickly changed into his dress suit and finally he turned to face Philuffy again.

"And then, what do you want to——.....-!?"

The face of Lux who was talking suddenly stiffened still.

The hands of Philuffy who had already changed into an outfit with similar coloring like Lux's were each holding underwear of different color.

At one hand was purple, while the other hand had black with slightly thin fabric.

Until now he had seen the underwear of female students through several incidents, but what Philuffy was holding were underwear with mature atmosphere that couldn't be categorized the same like them.

Instantly Lux imagined how Philuffy would look wearing them but,

"Which one do you think will be fine for Nee-chan's change of clothes?"

"That's not something to ask me isn't it!?"

Lux spontaneously retorted with rough voice.

It appeared that Philuffy was also scrutinizing Relie's baggage on top of accompanying her.

Of course, such things were usually prepared by servants, but in case of there was no staff of Aingram house nearby or they were in a long travel that took several days, as attendant Philuffy would need to procure them on-site or ordering them and making arrangement.



With such meaning also included, it seemed that Philuffy was thinking by herself about the preparation for the sake of her big sister Relie whom she would be assisting, but—.

".....Wait, this bag. It's only filled with nothing but snacks though?"

When Lux asked her to show him the content of the bag she prepared, the capacity was occupied by foods like cookie, donut glazed with honey, cheese tart, or whole orange.

"..... Onee-chan too, perhaps she will get hungry in the middle of work."

"What was that pause just now!?"

Lux retorted, but Philuffy was silent without a single change in her expression.

Philuffy was absolutely planning to eat them by herself.

Lux was sighing with that prediction while recalling his own experiences in doing chores.

He had experienced being someone's attendant or carrying luggage in army march, so he used those experiences as reference.

"Err, what to bring will be different each time depending on where you are going, but I think fundamentally it's better to prepare necessities with excellent functionality and small articles."

Overcoat to protect against cold, wallet, pocket watch, notebook and pen, household medicine, and so on, Lux chose the essentials and stuffed them into the bag together with Philuffy.

After five minutes, the packing for a day trip of someone who was working as Relie's attendant was completed.

"Lu-chan, amazing."

Philuffy made a small applause \*clap clap\* and praised him with her usual serious expression.

But, it also looked like Philuffy's expression was vaguely dissatisfied.

To be more accurate, his childhood friend's gaze was fixed on the bag of sweets.

"Eerr, I think that it's quite full already but, want to try putting in the sweets too?"

"Un."

When Lux asked her, Philuffy nodded as though she had been waiting for it.

But, naturally not everything could go in. Half was the most that could be brought.

"......Unfortunate."

Philuffy muttered with the slightest hint of dejection hinted within her usual expressionless face.

Lux smiled wryly seeing that.

She hadn't changed since childhood in regard to her love for sweets.

Lux searched for another bag, stuffed the remaining sweets into it, and then put it in inside his own bag.

"I will carry the remaining half for you, so tell me if you run out."

"......"

Hearing Lux's words, Philuffy's eyes sparkled with her serious face staying unchanged.

And then, the next moment—.

"Uwah!?"

\*Gyuu\*. With a motion that was slow but going through the shortest route, she embraced Lux's body.

"Thank you, Lu-chan. I love you."

Philuffy whispered with a faint happy smile.

The warmth of the body that was clinging tightly, and the softness of the voluptuous breasts that were pressed on him caused blood to rush to Lux's head.

"Wai-, wait, let go Phi-chan! My packing is.....that's, I still haven't finished it."

Lux hurriedly try to make her let go of him, but it didn't really go smoothly.

While he was doing such thing, a knocking sound could be heard once more.

"Philuffy-<sup>young</sup> <sup>lady</sup>ojousama, Lux-sama. It will be soon time to depart, have you finished preparing?"

The voice of Relie's secretary who was also there at breakfast came from the other side of the door.

"Err that's—there is no problem!?"

The panicked Lux immediately yelled with the implication that he didn't want her to open the door, but he blundered.

‘We will come down soon so please wait.’ He should have said that.

"Is that so, then there is something that I wish to hand over first—!? Please excuse me!"

The female secretary who opened the door and entered inside spontaneously turned red in surprise.

And then, she closed the door hard and rushed down stair right away.

"No, wait!? You are misunderstanding!?"

Lux yelled in panic, but it was already too late.

After that, by the suggestion of Relie who was being considerate for some reason, the departure time was delayed for ten minutes.

—

## Part 4

After they left the villa that was actually a mansion, they finally departed to the third block of Cross Field.

They traveled mainly by using horse-drawn coach, but they were going through paved path, so the shaking wasn't that bad.

Inside the coach, other than Lux, Philuffy, and Relie, there were only the female secretary and the coachman who was driving the coach. Ten-odd minutes after their departure, Philuffy who was sitting beside Lux had quickly started dozing off sleepily.

"Phi-chan, you mustn't sleep. If you don't guard Relie-san properly——"

"......Un. I, know."

Philuffy let out a sleepy voice even now and looked up with an absentminded face.

It seemed that Relie would be accompanied by at least two guards when she went out, but today Lux and Philuffy had to serve as their replacement.

Naturally, although they were outside Academy, they had their Sword Devices on their sword belt.

Lux was resolved to also fight when push came to shove.

"Even so, isn't Relie-san anxious?"

"My, I wonder what do you mean? Even though I look like this, in the business world I am known as a capable young lady you know?"

Relie made a teasing smile at Lux's question.

But, what Lux was concerned about wasn't that.

"No, that's not it. About the security, I wonder if it will be enough with just us——"

No matter how strong Philuffy was and how excellent her skill as Drag-Knight, they didn't know what would happen if they were actually attacked.

Lux too almost had no experience doing chores of guarding important person, so he said that for caution's sake.

"Geez Lux-kun, you worrywart. You are Phi's escort, so it will be fine if you relax more and accompany her you know?"

"But——"

"Besides, if it's about Philuffy then you don't need to worry. Even though she looks like this, she is sensitive to other people's killing intent and hostility."

"Err, she is already sleeping though.....?"

"Zzz....."

When he noticed, Philuffy who was doing her best to resist the sleepiness until just now finally lowered her eyelids and began to quietly let out sleeper's breathing.

Or rather, her posture had crumbled somewhat and she was leaning until Lux beside her. How should he say it, there was something soft pressing on him.

".....As expected from Phi. She isn't flinching back even at her first duty. As I thought she really has talent as guard."

"How pampering you are to your little sister!? Or rather, wake up Phi-chan! I told you it's no good to sleep in this kind of time——"

Lux felt his strength drained seeing Relie who was like always while lightly shaking Philuffy beside him.

"Nn, it's fine. ....I'm properly, awake."

"At least say that with your eyes opened!?! Even the miss secretary is watching anxiously since some time ago you know!?"

"You are really exaggerating, Lux-kun. Rash people who would do something stupid like aiming at the coach of Aingram conglomerate won't appear that often. That's why it will be fine."

"You are already denying the necessity of the guard duty itself though!?"

In the end, wasn't Relie just assigning Philuffy as her aide only for the sake of her mental healing?

The time inside the coach was passing while such doubt passed Lux's mind.

—

## Part 5

But, in the end Lux's anxiety only ended up as absurd fear, after that they safely arrived to their destination, in front of a branch store at third block.

".....Amazing."

Lux who entered inside the building spontaneously raised his voice seeing that sight.

It was a branch shop of Welled Company that was under the umbrella of Aingram conglomerate.

The building made from wood and brick looked conspicuous. It was bigger than he imagined.

A straight paved route was stretching from the closed gate that was a defense point against Abyss. The shop's huge delivery entrance was connected on the route's extension.

It was as though the building was the symbol of greed to quickly buy up the many articles that were brought from Ruin or the outside.

Inside the shop that had high class feeling in some respect, there was no wild hustle and bustle like in the market, but the eyes of the men and women of all ages who were exchanging business discussion at their respective table shared the same fierce light in their eyes.

Lux too had got involved several times with this world through his life of chores, and it seemed the characteristic aura that merchants possessed was the same anywhere.

Relie too, right after she lightly greeted the branch manager of the company who should be her associate, her expression immediately turned serious and they exchanged stories like the scrutiny of commodity, transactions talk, present market price, and so on.



Beside Relie who was having discussion with a smile that showed no opening, the female secretary who accompanied her was also taking memo with a serious face—,

".....Wait, eh?"

Lux couldn't see Philuffy's figure and thought of it as strange. Then he noticed the poking on his shoulder from the side.

Philuffy was standing beside him with her usual expressionless face.

"Lu-chan. Let's look around together at various merchandise."

"Eh.....!?"

Philuffy was nibbling on a honey glazed donut while saying that.

This shop had three floors, and each floor was amazingly wide.

Certainly it was a place where they could look around without trouble but—,

"No, that's bad right!? We are coming here.....more or less as guard or for studying, that's our position here!"

"Onee-chan told me it's fine to study by observing around here."

"We aren't counted even as helper!?"

"Also, tell me if there is anything you want to buy? I received money from Onee-chan."

"We were even given pocket money-!?"

What happened with being apprentice for being secretary and guard.....?

And then, was it fine for him to not study for later?

He had known about Relie's lackadaisical attitude since the past, but as expected this still made him felt exhausted.

Even so the public safety of Cross Field was good, furthermore a heavy security was laid out at the surrounding of this shop.

The possibility of problem occurring here was remarkably low.

Besides Lux's mission in the end would be only to pretend in appearance, he wouldn't be able to go as far as learning how to do business discussion for real anyway.

Then—perhaps familiarizing himself with the company atmosphere of this place was also a valid method.

"I get it, Phi-chan. Then, how about we look around for a bit?"

"Un. Let's go, together."

Lux observed around inside the shop together with Philuffy who made a faint smile.

A floor of the three storey shop was fairly wide, it was divided into several section.

It seemed the shop only dealt with few kind of perishable food, but things like bottled seafood or jerky were preserved foods that were liked anywhere.

Because those kinds of foods were also handy for Lux at the period of his life of chores, he was looking at them with nostalgic feeling. The shop assistant immediately prepared a chair for him, asking if he wanted to taste a sample.

"Ah, don't mind me. We are only looking around so——"

"This is, tasty you know?"

"——Wait, you already eat one!?"

Lux who tried to act reserved made his retort, but Philuffy was chewing the jerky silently.

"Now now, feel free. Please sample the food freely. The result of this year is great as you can see."

"Ye, yes....."

Urged by the shop assistant's smile, Lux also sampled the jerky.

Compared to in the past, with the jerky that was only hard and salty that he chewed at his life of chores, this one had a special taste with nice aroma too.

"This, gives the aroma of oak."

Philuffy who gulped her jerky and nodded muttered that with a small voice.

Then, the shop assistant reacted in delight.

"Oo, as expected from the little sister of Relie-sama. You have an expert eye there to be able to notice that. Now now, how about the dried grape here too?"

"I like, sweet things."

"Ah, I'm sorry..... We also want to look around at other thing, so let's stop with this for now——"

Philuffy's eyes shined in excitement, but for Lux it would be awkward to stay here longer.

Because there was a saying among the merchants, there was nothing more dangerous than something free.

After that, they looked around even more at various things like coffee and tea, sword for self-protection, fur and clothes, and so on, but it appeared that being a daughter from Aingram conglomerate would cause one's name to be widely known, because Philuffy was welcomed no matter where they went.

At first Lux felt awkward at that treatment, but after a while he was getting used to it.

And then, even for Lux too who had been doing various odd jobs for five years, he was having fun after so long looking at various utensils and merchandises that he recognized.

(Somehow, it's nostalgic doing something like this.....)

He wondered how long ago it was.

He suddenly recalled something. At time when Lux's mother was still in good health, there was an offer if he was interested going to see the main office of Aingram company together with Philuffy.

Right after that, Lux's grandfather Wade remonstrated the emperor that was carrying out a despotic administration, then Lux's family was banished from the imperial court. Because of that, in the end he was unable to accept the offer—.

"Ah, this one, perhaps it looks quite good—"

While Lux was thinking such thing, he muttered his impression about the knife in front of his eyes.

Perhaps it was made from a good steel that was heated and hammered well, the sharp edge part and the balance of the blade's thickness were nice. And then, the shortness was suited for his chores too.

But, at that moment, a young man merchant beside him suddenly approached beside Lux and Philuffy.

"Oo. Do you like that one? That is a knife I procured from neighboring country, a skilled blacksmith made it. But—, I have something better this way."

The gentle looking man with wide physique seemed to be a merchant who came from foreign country and not someone from the Welled Company.

The moment the merchant looked at Philuffy's face, he took out a scabbard attached with leather belt that was applied with splendid ornament from the bag he was carrying and showed it.

"This is.....it's a bit of antique, but this is a short blade that was forged by a famous smith at Wam province ten years ago. Its sharpness and solidness are guaranteed."

"Is—that so?"

Lux took that short sword and gazed at it.

He remembered hearing such rumor several times when he was doing chores at blacksmith workshop, but this kind of showy ornament wasn't really Lux's preference, and it looked expensive.

"How about it? This leather belt is without a doubt the real thing. If it's now I'll give you discount——"

What to do?

Most likely the price would be outside of Lux's reach, but perhaps it would be better to at least show it to Relie?

"Perhaps that's.....a fake."

"Eh——?"

The moment Lux and the merchant tilted their head open mouthed, Philuffy held the short sword over her eyes and stared at it. She then muttered that.

"I saw something like this before, this one's smell isn't really old, also, it looks like the iron's quality is bad, so it's also smelly there, that's how I know."

Philuffy turned her gaze toward the merchant with her usual expressionless face and bland tone.

"N, no, such thing, you will understand from looking at that sword belt——"

"The leather is genuine. But the inside is different—is, what I think."

"Ueh.....!?"

It appeared to be bull's eye. The merchant who came from the side suddenly showed uneasiness and acted flustered.

His gaze constantly darted around to the surrounding, confirming whether attention was gathered on him.

From that action it was clear whether what Philuffy said was the truth or not.

(.....Shocking——)

This traveling merchant surely saw Philuffy who was looking absentminded by herself and tried to sell her a fake, but he met an unexpected counterattack like this.

If it got exposed that he was trying to sell a fake intentionally and got caught here, it would be the same as having his future as a merchant severed.

"Thi, this is truly an inexcusable thing that I have done! Du, due to some mistake it got mixed up with a different merchandise it seems——, I, I beg you to please keep this a secret!"

"....."

Philuffy was staring fixedly at the face of the earnestly apologizing merchant with an expression without emotion.

For someone who didn't know her, this silence from Philuffy might felt scary instead.

"The knife before, I want it. The first one."

".....Eh? Eeeh!? Of course. If it's right now I will give it for cheap!"

The merchant made an awkward business smile and brought out the knife without any decoration before this.

"Make it free."

"Eh.....!?"

It appeared that the knife was of a good quality, because the merchant said "No, as expected that's....." with twitching face.

"Is free okay?"

In the end, the merchant was overwhelmed by her pressure and folded.

While Lux was staring at that event from beginning to end in mute amazement, Philuffy accepted the knife wrapped in cloth before she presented it toward Lux.

"Here."

"Eh.....?"

Lux tilted his head at this sudden act.

"For Lu-chan. It's thanks, for helping me, at the morning."

Philuffy pressed the bundle on him with a serious face.

"No need to hold back, it's free after all."

"Ahaha, thank you....."

When Philuffy who was obstinate despite her appearance was like this, he could do nothing except shutting up and accepting it.

Lux said his thanks with a wry smile and suddenly a footstep came from nearby.

"How's that, Phi too is unexpectedly pretty good right?"

It appeared that the business discussion was over. Relie approached along with the female secretary.

"If it's food ingredients than Phi can sort out which one is good or bad by smell, even though she look like this but she is reliable you know?"

Reiri puffed up her chest proudly before she then added "But, she is still not there in grasping the market price and regarding knowledge though".

"....."

The sharpness of her sense of smell might be the influence of the Abyss seed Ratatoskr that was dwelling inside her body, but in the first place Philuffy seemed to look absentminded, so she excelled in seeing through something's true essence.

All things considered, Philuffy who obtained the knife for free might unexpectedly be a big shot.

"Lu-chan, you see me in better light now?"

"Yes. That was amazing, Phi-chan."

When Lux showed a smile, Philuffy too made a faint smile.

The atmosphere of ordinary days where he played together with Philuffy.

Lux and Philuffy shared the nostalgic and gentle atmosphere together.

—



## Part 6

In the end even after that there was no trouble that happened. They went around at various places and at night—they safely returned to the villa at the first block.

After receiving an aromatic tea in the living room and took a breather, Lux went outside to enjoy the cool air.

When he went out to the balcony from the window at second floor, the cool air caressed his hair.

"Even so, it was unexpected."

Lux was thinking of Philuffy who looked as though she hadn't changed since the past, and yet she showed a little bit of growth even as Relie's secretary and guard.

He got the feeling of relieve that today went well and an emotion that felt like a bit of loneliness.

"But, everyone is changing huh. I too—"

When he was talking to himself like that, a footstep suddenly came from behind and Philuffy arrived at his side.

"Thank you for your hard work today, Phi-chan."

"Un."

Her words were few as usual, but a vague hint of happiness was included within her tone.

"Thank you, for accompanying us today."

Philuffy sat beside him at the balcony while quietly said that to him.

"No. It was a really enjoyable work. At first I didn't know just what would happen but——"

When Lux was smiling wryly while recalling the case of the packing and the food sampling like that,

"....."

\*Puih\*

Philuffy puffed up her cheeks slightly and averted her face from Lux.

"Wai, wait a second.....? Did I, said anything strange!?"

".....It wasn't, work."

"——Eh?"

Lux looked puzzled for a moment, but immediately after, he noticed what Philuffy tried to say.

Come to think of it, certainly regarding the matter this time, he had never heard anyone calling it work for even a single time.

He was only forcefully invited by her big sister Relie to accompany them for reference.

And then Philuffy was spending time with Lux without paying any mind about work or duty at all.

"I, didn't make any work request to Lu-chan, you know?"

Philuffy told him while inside her expressionless face, a vague hint of dissatisfaction oozed through.

"Because, I only wanted Lu-chan, to accompany me together."

"Ah....."

Philuffy's pure eyes were staring fixedly at Lux's face.

"You're, right. Sorry, Phi-chan."

Lux too let out a breath and smiled in respond to Philuffy's words.

For Lux who had the shackle of criminal status and life of chores ingrained deeply into himself, it was something natural.

The feeling of himself growing and changing little by little.

But Philuffy was treating Lux not as a criminal of the old empire or even as the chore prince, but merely as her important childhood friend.

(Could it be——)

Perhaps, Philuffy remembered about the promise at their childhood, of the offer to Lux to look around together at Aingram's shop.

For the current Lux, her feeling that was unchanged like that felt really pleasant for him.

"Thank you for inviting me this time. It was fun."

"I'm glad."

Philuffy let out a faint sigh of relieve, then she quietly brought her pure expression close to Lux.

"I, won't make request or anything at Lu-chan. If there is anything I want, I'll always say it, and invite Lu-chan——"

Her tone sounded absentminded following her own pace like usual.

However, that tone felt somehow talkative for Philuffy. She continued like that.

"That's why Lu-chan too, you must not act reserved with me, okay?"

And then, she showed her usual faint smile that no one other than Lux would notice.

‘Aah.

So it’s something like that.’ Lux realized her feeling.

Since the past she was calling those who were close to her with nickname was also because she didn’t want to act reserved with each other.

Her being a daughter of Aingram conglomerate, or Lux’s position as prince or criminal, those were irrelevant. Her act was filled with such feeling.

"Yes. Best regards from here on too, Phi-chan."

That was why, Lux responded to her feeling with a smile—but,

"Then, today too, let’s sleep together?"

".....Eh!?"

"I said, I won’t make request or anything, right?"

"Wai-, wait a second!? Thi, this isn’t that kind of problem—!?"

The sudden suggestion that was said with a serious face caused Lux to turn bright red and panicked.

"My? Phi is lonely you know? Since Lux-kun moved to another room in the dormitory——"

"Why is even Relie-san coming here!?"

In the end, it would become like this when he spent time with these two.

"Before, I presented Lu-chan, with a knife you know?"

Philuffy threatened with just a bit dissatisfied tone while her face remained serious.

"Even though normally it doesn’t seem like you are interested with trade, don’t get calculating just in this kind of time-!?"

—

In the end Lux lost against the pressure and that day he slept with Philuffy on the same bed with canopy attached, but naturally Lux couldn't sleep from the excitement and he spent a difficult night.

# **Chapter 5: Celistia Chapter – The Feeling of The Academy’s Strongest**

## Part 1

"Fua, aa....."

The Academy in Cross Field.

Lux was making a big yawn at a corner of that wide ground.

The time he woke up today was at five a.m., an hour earlier than usual.

At his hands were a long bamboo broom and several large buckets that got several sheets of dust clothes hanging on them.

His outfit wasn't his usual uniform, but a work clothes with burnt brown color.

The weather was clear, but perhaps because the autumn was almost over, the air felt chilly on the skin.

Lux's body shivered slightly from the blowing wind and then he lightly stretched his body.

".....Oops. I mustn't be half asleep, let's work properly."

He lightly slapped his cheeks with his hands and put spirit into himself to make himself awake.

He was at a facility with round shape like an annual tree ring, where each circle was gradually getting higher the nearer they were to the outside.

Lux was standing on the empty audience stand of the practice ground.

The cleaning of Drag-Ride's practice ground was one of the large-scale requests that the Academy sometime made to him.

Because this facility possessed spaciousness in the top category even inside the whole Academy's ground, it took time and effort to clean it.

Of course it was impossible to do it alone, so the area he was cleaning in the end was only a part of it, but Lux gave it his all by his own initiative and woke up early and did the chore diligently.

The basic of this job was to sweep and clean using bamboo broom, and lightly wiped the part that was especially dirty with damp cloth.

He would use soap at persistent dirty spot, but this time there wasn't so many spots like that.

Lux was really focused since he started working and performed the work, then—,

".....Eh?"

How much time had passed?

Lux finally noticed that when he finished cleaning about half of the area that was assigned to him.

At the center of the practice ground, on the ground that was surrounded by circular wall, a girl wearing pilot suit was standing.

".....Celis-senpai? This early in the morning."

Lux muttered that, at the same time his eyes were stolen by the movement of the girl that was visible from the audience stand.

She had her rapier shaped Sword Device unsheathed, and she kicked on the ground almost at the same time.

She leaped through a distance of more than ten meter in one breath, at the same time she released several sharp thrusts forward.

Following that, she gathered light particles in high speed after drawing her sword and summoned—the form of Drag-Ride.

She instantly equipped a golden armor and unleashed an attack with her special armament, a huge lance, completing the sequence of forms.



From drawing out her sword until equipping Drag-Ride—while even attacking during that time, all of those actions were done quickly in three seconds, which caused a sudden gust to whirl at the surrounding.

"As expected, she is amazing....."

Even from the view point of Lux who possessed expert skill as Drag-Knight, the skillfulness of her technique caused him to unconsciously watch in fascination.

It was a feat that was only allowed for her who had polished her training of martial art and sword art until the extreme, making her able to perform several thousands of forms.

Celistia Ralgris.

She was the eldest daughter of a great feudal lord of the new kingdom—the Ralgris house, and the girl who served as the captain of the raid squad Syvalles.

Even more than her famed strength as the Academy's strongest, her dignity and beauty that were armed with her grace and strictness would attract anyone toward her.

Furthermore the personality that was brought about from the self-confidence and focus she was clad with—her characteristic aloof aura gave her a worthy charisma for a member of the four great nobles.

"She is practicing Drag-Ride again from this early morning....."

Even though it still hadn't been that long since the campus festival and the deadly battle against the Sacred Eclipse, the strictness and the time spent for her training were increasing further.

Celis was able to do that exactly because she possessed stamina that would make male military officer to lose face and a powerful will.

(I need to be careful not to become nuisance for Celis-senpai.....)

Lux cleaned up the place as quietly as possible while staring at her practice with a side glance.

She practiced skating midair and basic movements before moving to practice swinging with her weapon.

And then, she coordinated action from activating Divine Raiment until various kind of movements in a coordinated movements that linked from one motion to the next motion, displaying a complicated tactics.

After that thirty more minutes passed. It appeared that she was concentrating on her training very much, she didn't notice Lux's existence until the very end and finished up her training.

Celis stopped moving to rest her body and dispelled her armor.

She sent a brief glance at the surrounding ring before she started walking toward the waiting room's direction.

"Aa....."

Lux's chore also coincidentally finished at that time, so he thought to at least greeted her, but she had left ahead of him.

He chased her back figure in hurry and saw her entering the waiting room that was a bit of distance away from the practice ground.

"—Wait, this is bad!!?"

Lux stopped his legs in front of the door and let out a sigh of relief.

He had already blundered several times in this Academy. There was no way he could do anymore act like peeping again.

He should wait until Celis finished changing and got out, or perhaps he should knock the door and called out.

Lux thought that and he leaned back on a tree nearby the shed, it was then—,

—

"Haa..... Unfortunately, it was a failure again this time."



—

"—Eh?"

Celis's voice that suddenly came from the other side of the waiting room's wall caused Lux to tilt his head.

".....Yes, that's right. I was asked by two of my juniors from the second year for a coaching. I was cheerful from being relied on after so long, so the day before yesterday, I asked them to accompany me in my morning training but——"

It was indeed Celis's talking voice.

The people who were training at early morning was mostly limited to only Syvalles's members if he remembered right, but today he didn't saw 'anyone else' other than Celis.

(Just who is she talking with——?)

It was when Lux felt dubious like that,

"—But, the two ran away in the middle. It's strange, I had already relatively lightened the practice content though. Perhaps it is just as I expected, I am really hated.....it's depressing."

"Er, Celis-senpai.....?"

"-.....!?"

When Lux called out from the window of the waiting room, \*bam\* a sound came from inside and Celis quickly got out from the waiting room.

She had changed completely from her pilot suit into her uniform, so there was no problem, but shock was carved on her face.

"Lu, Lux-!? Why are you here!?"

Celis's cheeks reddened while looking unusually flustered.

When Lux quickly looked around at the surrounding, he saw a small bird that was on the window flew away.

"Aah, please wait! I still haven't finished——"

".....Wait, was senpai talking with that bird just now!?"

As expected, there was no one except Celis inside the waiting room it seemed.

Different from herself in the past, it seemed she had resolved herself to speak more frankly about her worry to the people around her, but was she now back to taking her problem upon herself alone?

Lux retorted at this unexpected side from this girl who was normally dignified, in respond,

"Yo, you are wrong. Just now it was....., a, a doll. I was only talking to a doll that was decorating the room. It wasn't like I was unable to speak frankly about my worry to anyone and immersed myself in self-hatred, I didn't do such thing by any means so——"

"No, there is almost no difference whether it's a doll or a little bird though!? In a sense that feels excessively lonely you know!?"

It felt like her trying to lie was making it even more awful instead.

".....I, it doesn't matter so please just treat it like you haven't seen anything! Prying further is not permitted!"

The yell from the red faced Celis made Lux nodded.

After they took deep breath until both of them calmed down, Lux explained why he was here.

When he was cleaning up the practice ground, he happened to see Celis and chased after her to give his greeting. After he told her that, Celis showed a complicated looking smile.

"Is that so. I too am still immature, to be unable to detect your presence from the audience stand like that."

She muttered that sounding slightly self-torturing.

Regarding that, it was also slightly unexpected for Lux.

Even if she was relaxing her attention because she was inside the safe Academy's ground, but for someone at Celis's level, she should have noticed Lux's presence.

"Could it be——, Celis-senpai has something weighing your mind?"

"....."

\*Twitch\*, Celis was shaken greatly hearing Lux's question.

"I, it's not something really——. No, I should talk about this to Lux. Before this, I caused trouble for you because I stayed quiet. And, I also trust you."

Celis said such thing with her cheeks faintly blushing.

The memory of the punishment game that was carried out after the campus festival the other day.

The sensation of that passionate kiss was resurrected, causing Lux's body to ache heatedly.

"E, err——, yes!"

Lux himself also found it hard to look properly at Celis's face from the embarrassment.

After Lux raised his voice to divert his mind from such hard pounding of his heart, Celis slowly began to talk.

"That's, I have the feeling as though my juniors are avoiding me. Even though I felt that I had become able to be more frank than before with everyone around me after much trouble, and yet now I wonder if it is no good as expected.....?"

Celis hung her head down with a vaguely heavy dark aura enveloping her.

(Aa....., so it's the usual thing.)

Lux saw that and smiled wryly.

As the result of Celis's seriousness and strong sense of responsibility getting mixed with her slightly clumsy side, sometimes she would be dejected like this.

"Even though some juniors who I wasn't really acquainted with unusually relied on me, I was unable to coach them properly. I wonder if there is anything inadequate within me? I don't understand. It's sad. Now I ended up training by myself again..... It's lonely.....ah, i, it's not like I'm feeling lonely or anything you know!? I am the captain of Syvalles after all, I'm completely all right."

"No, senpai doesn't need to hide it anymore! It's making me unable to stay here further hearing that! More importantly—the reason why those junior girls stopped training together with Celis-senpai.....what could it be?"

Those girls came by their own initiative to volunteer receiving training from Celis, so it was a bit strange that they would immediately stopped by themselves like that.

Surely Celis was worrying because she was unable to understand the reason, but—.

"Perhaps that was because, the training menu was harsh. I think that's all there is to it."

Lux suddenly interrupted like that with a conviction from his instinct.

He had also thought this when they were training together at the summer training camp but, even the members of Syvalles threw in the towel from Celis's training amount. Based on that, there was no way that the average students could keep up with Celis.

Surely the junior girls understood that and backed out of the training.



Lux was quiet confident of that conjecture inside his mind, but,

"Tha, that shouldn't be true! I too was considerate at those girls who were accompanying my training for the first time, so I halved the training amount."

"Eeerrr....."

Lux made a complicated expression in respond to Celis's yell and he was at loss of how to respond.

Most likely, those juniors were unable to endure even after that.

The stamina of Celis who had imposed to herself training that could even be called as severe since her childhood was far surpassing the stamina of the average people.

"As I thought, I believe there was a problem in how I act and behave. I wonder why my personality became like this. Haa....."

Seeing Celis getting dejected again, Lux thought.

With how Celis herself was losing confidence, it felt like the effect would be minor even if he persuaded her.

If Lux's conjecture was correct, those junior girls didn't hate Celis, it was only that the training was too harsh—.

"I guess. Then, how about if we do this?"

There Lux proposed a certain suggestion.

"I will accompany Celis-senpai doing your training menu for a while. If there is something that I noticed, I'll speak out my opinion. By doing that, won't Celis-senpai yourself notice just what did you do wrong this time?"

In other words, Lux would act the role of training partner for 'Celis's junior coaching'.

By using that as reference, he would make Celis herself to judge the reason of why she was avoided by her juniors.

Celis was listening to that in a daze for a while, but before long her eyes shined fiercely and she took Lux's hand.

"That's an excellent plan! It will be a really excellent chance in order for me to learn where I'm inadequate at."

Lux responded with a smile, but actually there was drawback to this suggestion.

(In the first place, there should be no way Celis-senpai has made any strange error.....)

The problem was how Celis herself couldn't notice how the excessiveness of the training was exactly the problem.

Even if Lux pointed it out, she wouldn't be able to comprehend it fully, so it would be better if he conveyed it to her by making her feeling it for real throughout the process.

From his experience of training together normally with her, there was no problem with Celis's guidance and attitude, there was no way she was behaving in a way that would make her got hated.

If Lux who possessed stamina could keep up with Celis's training until the end, he would be able to proof that.

"Then, can I please ask you of this right away starting from tomorrow for several days period?"

"Yes. It will be fine if trim on my time doing chores for a bit."

Lux answered right away. Celis showed a relieved sigh with a smile hearing that.

"I understand. But, Lux is a boy, so you will be fine if your training amount is the same like mine right?"

"Euh.....!?"

The moment she said that, a strange voice slipped out from Lux's throat.

Celis's stamina wasn't ordinary, so if Lux attempted to perform the same training menu like her, he would get crushed.

"As expected, a boy with stamina is heartening. That's right, this is a good chance so I will increase the training a bit more than usual to match Lux——"

"The usual is all right-! Thi, this time it's for the sake of confirming Celis-senpai's method in the end, that is my objective——!"

Lux said in panic. Celis pondered for a bit and,

"You're.....right. I almost lost sight of our original purpose. The priority is to search the cause why those girls are avoiding me. Training with Lux—I'm looking forward to it."

"Ah, yes....."

Lux was feeling relieved while promising to hear more about the menu later, then she parted from Celis for the moment.

"It's fine with this, right.....?"

He would convey to Celis who was feeling down in her heart, that there was no problem with her personality and attitude that would make her got avoided, and made her to recover her self-confidence.

In order to do that, Lux made that suggestion, but he wondered, would he too ended up like those aforementioned juniors and became unable to keep up with Celis?

However, in front of Celis who was looking so delighted like that, he couldn't withdraw his words.

"Just in case, I should think up a countermeasure....."

For caution's sake, after that he managed the requests in general from the headmaster, dorm mother, and the students for a while, then he headed to where his classmate Tillfur was at.

He asked her to cancel or postpone as much as possible the most recent requests that felt like it would take a bit more effort.

"What's left, is only to do it.....huh."

Lux took a deep breath and resolved himself.

"Well, I'll manage somehow, right.....?"

Or rather, he prayed that he would really be able to manage somehow.

Lux talked to himself with that tone that was filled with wishful thinking.

—

## Part 2

"I, I was naïve.....!"

The morning the next day, inside the classroom where the class lesson was going on.

Lux was listening to the teacher's lecture like usual while desperately holding himself back from falling prostrated on his table.

(Sleepy....., no, I'm too tired I cannot sleep.....)

To think, that the training of Celis that he witnessed at yesterday morning was actually already starting from an hour before that. It was unexpected.

They started from early morning with running through the Academy's ground and muscle strength training.

After that they carried out training of performing forms of sword art and martial art at the practice ground, then they moved to Drag-Ride training.

Using Drag-Ride consecutively would cause burden, so every fifteen minutes they would take a break for five minutes in the form of calisthenics, they carried out three set of that.

They tidied up at seven o'clock. They wiped their sweat and changed into their uniform and headed to the dining hall.

There, finally the morning training menu was over.

He had no strength remaining for doing morning chores.

"Lux-chi, you okay? Somehow you look a bit, like your soul is leaving your body though.....?"

"Barely....."

Tillfur called out to him worriedly when it was lunch break.

If he could say his true feeling, he was nearly at his limit.

Even more than the pure amount of the training, the density of the training itself was very much so.

After Lux responded like that with a dry smile, the door of the classroom was knocked before it got opened right away.

"Lux, have you eaten lunch? I wish to start a light training in five more minutes——"

"Wait, we will also train at afternoon!?"

Lux reflexively yelled with his honest tone.

"It will be fine. It's only a simple training of mind control operation, so we will finish before the afternoon class. There is no need to worry."

Celis smiled brightly and said that without any malice.

"No, what I'm bothered with isn't the time——"

"Then, I will be waiting at the indoor practice ground, I'm looking forward to it."

"....."

Celis said only that with a proud face before turning on her heel and left.

If he was told that she would be waiting, then he had to go.

Lux lifted up his body with a stagger and then exited the classroom.

Honestly food couldn't even go through his throat, but he guessed he would manage somehow.....

"Lu-chan. You have to eat properly....., you know?"

Lux received a donut from Philuffy beside him while participating somehow in the lunch break training too.

After that, the training also continued after school as though it was only natural, and it continued until the sun had completely set.

—

## Part 3

"So Lux, have you noticed anything? A problem in my attitude and behavior——"

Early morning two days later.

They finished a two hours training and then took break in the waiting room. There Celis asked Lux like that with a voice that was tinged with nervousness.

".....Currently I don't see any particular problem, but"

To speak frankly, yesterday morning fatigue suddenly came down on him and it was the fact that he wished to stop, but he was able to continue somehow.

"Is there something, that is not good with me? It will be helpful if you can tell me clearly."

Lux recalled the scenes of him training together with Celis in these two days.

If he had to say what bothered him, excluding the harshness of the independent training——.

"Let's see. I had this feeling when training before wearing the Drag-Ride, but....."

".....Ye, yes. Please say what I've done poorly without any reservation!"

"Err, when senpai is baring the chest part of your pilot suit when it got hot, it will help if you do it in a way that won't enter my sight. Honestly, that's, it was a bit awkward....."

"It's about that-!? It's different from the answer that I was expecting!"



After Lux pointed out looking embarrassed, Celis also turned red and got stupefied.

"I, I rarely trained together with the opposite sex, so I didn't notice but—, as, as I thought, was Lux bothered?"

"Tha, that's a question that is really hard to answer for me but, that's, well.....just a bit."

Lux spoke ambiguously like that, but speaking frankly, it had gone far past being bothered.

Celis who was a top class beauty even in this Academy was defenselessly baring that voluptuous and pointed breasts, that was why he would gulp looking at that whether he wanted it or not.

Besides, because of the incident before, Lux became strangely conscious of Celis who broke through his heart's wall.

"I, I understand. Is there—anything else?"

"Eerr, after that, it's, when I forgot my water flask, Celis-senpai shared your drink with me, I was very happy."

Lux recalled the training yesterday while saying that. Celis puffed out her chest confidently hearing that.

"Doing that much is only natural. After all it will affect the body if you force yourself in the middle of training without water."

At that time too Celis was also saying "There is no need to be reserved, please drink water properly", and she half forcefully made Lux drank the water inside her flask that was mixed with honey and lemon.

"Just, at that time, I was embarrassed because we were putting our lips on the same flask though—"

"....."

The moment Celis heard Lux's words, she froze still.

"Yo, you don't need to notice even such things! Tha, that's, I too noticed that later on and it got stuck on my mind....."

Celis's face reddened while she confessed incoherently. Seeing that, Lux too became even more embarrassed.

A gentle atmosphere that was causing heart to beat fast was flowing between the two.

—

## Part 4

".....Is that so, then in the end, Lux haven't discovered my flaw yet."

A few minutes later.

Celis muttered with a tone that was vaguely relieved, and perhaps also somewhat vexed.

"It's all right. Celis-senpai is amazing and strong after all. Surely even this worry will also be solved somehow."

"I am, amazing.....?"

Celis looked a bit surprised at Lux's words.

"Yes. In the past I too did nothing but training with Drag-Ride alone, but it was difficult to continue doing so in a place where no one was watching. I think that Celis-senpai who keep doing it as though it's only natural is really strong and amazing."

Those words came from Lux's true feeling.

But, Celis made a somewhat brittle smile and gazed at empty air with a lonely expression.

"—Such thing, is not true."

"Eh.....?"

"Perhaps what I'm doing is certainly requiring effort. But, the more important thing is to be able to become someone else's strength."

Celis displayed a brittle face seen from the side and continued.

"Even when Wade-sensei....., Lux's grandfather taught me, that was the only thing I'm not good at. Simply defeating the enemy before my eyes, simply fighting in place of someone else..... If there is something like that

it's easy to understand but, understanding someone and giving them strength is difficult."

"Celis, senpai....."

"Keep it a secret from everyone else about how I'm whining like this okay? Even like this I'm the captain of Syvalles after all. Now, let's continue this after school. Because this afternoon we are requested to exterminate the Abyss that appeared near Cross Field——"

An Abyss appeared near Cross Field that should be quite far away from the Ruin.

Could this be also an influence from Sacred Eclipse that would end the world in half year more?

"-.....!?"

The moment Lux tried to stand up while thinking that, Lux's legs staggered.

"E, h.....?"

The sky was shaking, and the ground was approaching from the side.

"Lux!?"

Celis's voice seemed far away.

'I'm fine', the words that he should whisper didn't come out from his throat, his consciousness was suddenly getting distant.

—

## Part 5

"N, nn.....?"

When Lux opened his eyes, a familiar ceiling entered his sight.

It wasn't the medical room that he often visited, he was laid down on the bed of his dormitory room.

The hands of the clock were showing that it had only passed through noon.

He recalled Celis lending him her shoulder until they returned to the dormitory, but after that it seemed a few hours had passed.

"How are you feeling, Lux?"

The anxious expression of Celis who was looking down on him from the side made Lux to smile right away.

".....I'm sorry for making senpai worry. It looks like my sleep was a bit lacking."

Lux slowly lifted up his upper body and ascertained his body's condition.

There wasn't anywhere that was particularly in bad condition, according to what Celis heard from the school doctor, it seemed that this was because of light anemia and overworking.

Nonetheless, it seemed he had recovered, so Lux was going to return to the classroom for his class.

"—I'm sorry, I didn't notice until it become like this."

Celis suddenly spoke those words.

"Lux wasn't sleeping much because of the chores wasn't it? My consideration was lacking."

She quietly looked down and said that.

(No, I think the cause is surely the training's intensity though.....)

In any case, he didn't say it because it would be as though he was blaming her.

"I will nurse you, so please rest peacefully. If there is anything you want, you can say it whatever it is without reservation."

Celis pulled herself together and straightened her back while saying that.

Celis's own worry hadn't been resolved, but if she was telling him gallantly like that, then he felt like he could rest easy.

"Thank you very much. I'm happy with just that consideration."

Lux answered like that and stared at Celis who was sitting down beside the bed.

Then, Celis too was looking down at Lux who was lying down on the bed again with a gentle expression.

"Then, can I have an idle talk with you just for a bit? I was reflecting on myself why Lux fainted—and there was something that I faintly recalled."

The way she was speaking was unusual for Celis, but Lux nodded.

'Thank you very much.' After beginning with that, she started talking quietly.

"It's a story about my mother. Even now my mother is living in Ralgris house in good health, but five years ago—until the old empire was changed into the new kingdom, she wasn't really able to come out in the open."

According to Celis, her mother's body was weak, and giving birth to Celis alone was the best she could do.

Her inability to give birth to a son for Ralgris house that was a noted family of knight caused the surrounding relatives to treat her badly.

Within the culture and tendency of male chauvinism that the old empire carried out at the time—no, for a long time, several times more effort was necessary for Celis to be recognized as heir.

In other words, Celis's training and education that could even be called as excessive, everything was so that she could become a knight. She wholeheartedly didn't want her mother to feel bitter.

"But, it couldn't go well. I caused trouble for Wade-sensei, and after that I immersed myself in even more training, searching for righteousness—it would be great if there was other way to help mother, but the best I could do was only accomplishing my own desire. Perhaps I was unable to see anything."

Celis muttered with self-mockery.

Seeing that, Lux immediately lifted his body.

"I think, that's not it."

"Eh.....?"

Celis's eyes opened wide at Lux's words that he said out seriously.

"In the past, my mother died when I was a child, but if she is alive like Celis-senpai's mother, I would surely try to protect her no matter what—"

Lux paused for a moment, then he stared at Celis once more.

"I think Celis-senpai isn't mistaken or anything. But, now that you have become the strongest Drag-Knight in the Academy, I think it will be fine if Celis-senpai think about yourself more. At the very least that is what I think."

"....."

A small silence filled inside the room.

Before long Celis sighed with a smile and slowly took a deep breath.

"Lux is a really mysterious boy. It's the first time someone said that to me, that someone is looking at me like that. As I thought, I, to you——"

Celis slowly approached in front of Lux who was in sitting position and she brought her face closer.

That beautiful face which was blushing feverishly somewhat came right in front of Lux. The distance was shortened until it felt like their lips would touch.

Lux's heart jumped strongly in his chest—it was then he hallucinated that the window's glass seemed to shake.

"——!?"

Right after that, a shrill metallic sound that felt like splitting the head could be heard inside the room.

The sound resounded from the bell towers throughout the Cross Field ringing simultaneously.

It was the sound of bell that was warning the attack of Abyss.

When the two noticed that, tension ran through them.

"——Please rest here. I will go looking at the situation."

"Please wait Celis-senpai! I too——"

When Lux tried to get up from the bed, Celis was already rushed outside the room.

—



## Part 6

"There is no horn flute sound, so this doesn't seem to be someone's scheme but—, something is strange."

As a member of Syvalles, Celis who was wearing Divine Drag-Ride Lindwurm hurriedly moved toward the second block where the Abyss appeared.

The enemy was bird shaped Abyss that appeared from the Ruin Garden—Gryph.

It was a monster with atypical appearance of lower body of lion and upper body of eagle with large wings growing from its body.

Its torso had bright brown color. Only the area around its head that was emitting a sharp predatory eye glint that was covered with white feathers.

"Different from before, now Abyss is also appearing at other place than Ruin's surrounding. If this is also Sacred Eclipse's influence, then this is a dangerous omen."

Originally this was an enemy where several Syvalles members were needed to face just one of it, but because right now was an unforeseen situation, Celis prioritized quickness in dealing with it.

"GUAAaAAAAH!"

That monster that seemed to be embodying fierceness was expressing its rage and hostility perhaps because it was being chased by the Drag-Knights of the new kingdom.

"As I thought it's more comfortable to be alone like this. I can finish this without dragging anyone into it."

Celis calmly ward off the Abyss's threat and took a stance with her special armament Lightning Lance.

And then, she calmly looked forward and waited for the time of clashing.

It was silent for a few seconds.

The back wings of the Abyss twitched, and sharp feathers that were like knife were fired.

"—"

When Celis burned down the countless feathers attacking her from the front with Lightning Lance, the Gryph moved.

Its legs that were several times larger compared to the average lion were attacking Celis with a sharp trajectory, then—,

"Divine Gate."

A domain of light was instantly spread after Celis's quiet murmur.

It was the instant teleportation within a fixed distance by Lindwurm's Divine Raiment.

Celis dodged the attacking front legs of the Gryph and moved behind it. Then she pierced its back with her lance.

"GU, AaaAAAAAA-.....!?"

The dazzling lightning that surged right after that instantly scorched the large body.

The Abyss that got its core pierced and burned exploded and dispersed.

"Fuu....."

Celis who ascertained that let out a relieved sigh and relaxed her stance.

At that moment, the sound of air getting torn roared from behind her.

"GUSHAAAAAH!"

".....!?"

There was one other Gryph hiding behind the cover of a high bell tower where it could look down on Cross Field.

It growled and leaped at Celis's back.

".....Watch out-!"

Lux who was flying in Wyvern hurriedly cut into the Abyss's orbit, it was then—,

"—Lightning Flash."

Celis rotated and thrust her lance. The lightning fired from the lance's tip burned the second Gryph and stopped its movement.

"Eh.....?"

Lux was astonished by the reaction of Celis who should be completely taken by surprise and he hesitated slightly.

But, at that time his eyes met Celis's eyes.

"—Please finish it, Lux."

"Yes!"

Lux moved to attack almost at the same time while replying.

He ran his blade at the shoulder of the bird beast that was enveloped in fierce blaze and broke the core through the shortest route.

"GUGYaaAaAAAH!"

The second Gryph screamed and vanished. The danger had left from the second block.

In the end, it appeared that Celis had also predicted the existence of the second Gryph, or perhaps even taken by surprise she would be able to

immediately deal with it, in any case there wasn't any need for Lux to help her.

As was to be expected from someone who was called as the Academy's strongest.

"It looks like we are able to safely defeat them."

"Ah, yes....."

They descended on a park from the air nearby the bell tower and dispelled their armor.

It was fine and all to save the town from the threat of Abyss, but Lux was somehow feeling troubled of what to say and he was at a loss for words.

"Say....."

"Eerr——"

After a few seconds like that, both of them simultaneously started to speak, it was then,

"——Ooooi. Wait, both of you."

From the sky, Sharis of Triad was coming wearing Wyvern, while Noct and Tillfur came from the main street wearing Drake and Wyrn respectively.

"So you three also came here?"

"Naturally. We too are members of Syvalles you know? The princess and missy Philuffy are in the middle of Drag-Ride maintenance so they couldn't come though. Well, even so it's just as expected, from the beginning there wasn't any chance of us getting a turn here——"

Sharis said with a wry smile.

"That's why I said it already. Celis-senpai is totally enough against enemy of this level."

"No. Carelessness is prohibited. No matter how strong Celis-senpai is, there is no guarantee that there won't be any ambush. Besides—making only the captain to take the initiative and exterminate the enemy will make us lose our position."

Noct denied Tillfur's grief before she dispelled her Drake's armor.

She was looking at the Radar on her shoulder was surely because she was confirming that there was no Abyss reaction nearby.

"The mission is over. Let's go back home without wearing Drag-Ride in order to save our stamina."

"Let's do that. I'll search for a coach, so Tillfur, you go look for sweets stall."

"Roogger. Then, both of you just rest after doing all the work."

Noct's suggestion was accepted by Sharis, and Tillfur finished up the talk.

The three temporarily left from that place. The tense situation was completely changed and it suddenly became a relaxed mood.

"I'm sorry. Even though Celis-senpai told me to rest, I came here instead."

Lux was smiling wryly while scratching his head. Celis suddenly smiled and,

"No, you helped me."

Unexpectedly, she spoke her gratitude with earnest tone to him.

"I noticed that second Abyss, but thanks to you I was able to obtain some leeway. If the Triad also came, I think we would be able to determine the Abyss's position and number and defeat them more safely."

"....."

"Lux, there is one thing that I want to ask. Why were you and also those three were rushing here even though you all believed that I would be all

right? As I thought, were you all worried about me? Even now after I had discarded my reservation with you——"

".....Surely that's because Celis-senpai is popular as expected, isn't that's why?"

Celis was astounded by Lux's words that he said jokingly.

"There is meaning in fighting at your side, that's why comrades who wished to follow senpai gathered to you. Senpai isn't alone. I too am one of those who wish to be at Celis-senpai's side after all."

"....."

Celis was staring at Lux who said that with a bright smile with a dazed expression.

"Lux, is really unfair."

"Eh.....?"

"Even though originally it should be me who is being relied on as the senior, it is me who is relying on you. I'm acting spoiled to you. But, I want to accept it completely because it feels really pleasant."

Celis's cheeks abruptly loosened while she was looking embarrassed and vexed.

And then she slowly grasped Lux's hand.

"I was avoiding from making effort to talk with other so we can understand each other wasn't I? You, Sharis, and everyone else know about that personality of mine, even so you all stepped up to meet me halfway. I'm thinking that this time, I will be the one who approach those girls who are avoiding me, so that I will be able to understand them more. That's why——"

She cut off her words temporarily and stared at Lux with a straightforward expression.

"When I bumped into another wall, will you listen and give me advice again? Though perhaps this will make me into an unreliable senior for asking help to a boy my junior so many times like this."

"—Celis-senpai can do so anytime. I too will rely on senpai after all."

When Lux responded with a soft smile, Celis's eyes turned round in surprise and she averted her gaze shyly.

"Then, I'll command you to return to your usual schedule tomorrow. There is no need to accompany me in my training. Thank you very much, Lux."

It was a somewhat warm and awkward atmosphere.

He was happy that his relationship with Celis deepened once more.

"I too want to become someone who is able to guide everyone. I will understand those girls' feeling while giving early morning training—"

"No, that's why I'm saying, as long as that training with too high of a hurdle is just taken off the table, everyone will get close with senpai right away....."

Lux's retort that he said out while sweating spontaneously didn't seem to reach Celis whose eyes were sparkling.

Just as he thought, this seriousness and clumsiness had to be left alone somewhere.

"Bu, but, that's, is it also fine if I ask Lux to accompany my training sometimes? How should I say it, training together with Lux is really fun so....."

Celis muttered that with flushed cheeks a bit fretfully. Lux nodded.

"—Yes. If Celis-senpai is fine with me, then I'll gladly accept."

Lux showed a smile from the bottom of his heart and asserted that.

"Understood. Then, I'll especially prepare a training menu with my all for Lux's sake next time."

".....Wait, eeeeh!?"

He wanted to refuse it very much, but in front of Celis's bright smile, Lux couldn't find it within himself to say it.

(As I thought, I too am quite a showoff huh.....)

Perhaps the day Celis could guide her new juniors was still far off in the future.



## **Chapter 6: Yoruka Chapter – Aruji-sama's Punishment**

## Part 1

Since enrolling into Cross Field's Academy, things were going well for Lux.

Of course, there were only daughters of nobles around him, so problem would occur with him being the only male.

Because of his past as a prince of the old empire—and furthermore because of his role as a chore boy, sometimes there would be strange request coming to him from the female students, and sometimes he would also get dragged into various turmoil.

Even so if Lux's unique status was taken into consideration, it could be said that he had managed to blend into the Academy enough.

That was thanks to the girls around him.

Krulcifer who taught him the lesson, or Philuffy who was treating him the same like in the past.

Everyone of the Triad who acted amiably with him, or his little sister Airi who was controlling his reputation at the Academy, and so on. He was supported by many comrades and obtained a place to belong.

But, recently that was one thing that made Lux worry.

It wasn't about his current life in the Academy that was going well, it was—.

"Lux Arcadia. Do you have time? There is something that I have to tell you."

It's weekday at Academy—the short break after the morning class was over.

Instructor Raigree who exited the classroom beckoned at him, calling Lux out to the corridor where there wasn't anyone else.

Even Lux who had got thoroughly involved with many great incidents would be a bit nervous if he was called by a teacher.

(What could it be? I think I didn't do anything bad recently though—)

Raigree was a self-reliant woman, so Lux never received even a single request from her.

If this was something like a warning or instruction to him, he believed she would act more brazenly but—.

While Lux was cautious like that, a sentence about something that normally he put out of his mind came to him. In a sense it could be said that it was just as expected.

"Perhaps this is something that I originally should say to you. But, about that first year student, the girl who had just enrolled here, what's the deal with her?"

"Aaa....."

The moment Lux heard that, his face turned really complicated.

Even without listening to the detail, he understood everything just from that single sentence.

"This is about That girl from nation of Koto who introduced herself as your servant. That assassin of the old empire, Kirihome Yoruka."

In the past she confronted Lux who didn't wish for the revival of the old empire and both of them crossed swords.

But, at the end of that, they understood each other's feeling and reconciled. Yoruka then swore allegiance to Lux.

After that with Lux's intermediation—more accurately Lisha's intermediation that Lux requested, she was enrolled into the Academy under the pretext that the new kingdom would manage her.

Since then Yoruka should be spending peaceful days in the Academy as a first year student. But,

"I have told you before, Lux. That girl, she isn't blending into the Academy at all."

"As I thought, it's like that....."

Raigree's expression was displeased. Lux also responded with a complicated expression.

Yoruka's personality was like a fluttering wind that cannot be grasped, her way of thinking and action were also really particular.

Furthermore because her skill as Drag-Knight was also outstanding, Lux could easily imagine how she would be completely out of place even in the class.

But, his little sister Airi and Noct of Triad were also Yoruka's classmate, so Lux thought that they would follow up on her just barely, but—.

"Could it be, Yoruka is feeling troubled because she cannot get used to the Academy?"

".....Do you think so?"

The smiling face of the serious Instructor Raigree was scary.

"Eerr, is everyone around her troubled just as I thought?"

When Lux asked back awkwardly, Instructor Raigree took out a memo from her pocket.

‘Ah, I get a bad feeling.’

"In the middle of class, she said things like guarding you and sneaked away as she pleased. She isn't talking at all with her classmates. At training, she ignored the menu and did self-practice willfully. At mock battle, she used her partner as decoy to defeat her opponent. She won't listen to the instructor. She ignores the regulation for sleeping and waking up time. She won't reflect

even when she is scolded. In her clothes she is carrying hidden weapons that she won't part with. She took off her clothes as she pleased....."

"I, I get it! It's enough already!"

By the way, it seemed that list still had half remaining.

Until now Airi who was in the same class settled down the troubles, but as expected it seemed that Yoruka's actions couldn't be overlooked anymore.

Thus, it seemed that the talk came to Lux like this as he was the one leading her.

"But, I have to be the one warning her? Certainly she was calling me her master but, this is more or less a matter in the Academy, so someone like the headmaster Relie-san or even one of the teachers——"

"Do you believe, that girl will properly listen to anyone other than you?"

"I'm sorry....."

He was taking into consideration his position inside the Academy, but he retracted his statement when he saw Raigree's twitching face.

"It was Princess Lisha who proposed the enrollment of Yoruka, but it was you who asked her to do that right? Take responsibility to look after that girl as her master. This is my first request to you."

"I, understand."

Lux could only nod at the completely sound argument.

After the battle, he wanted to give a new place to belong for Yoruka who returned back to him.

Even though he had decided to look after her, and yet he was unable to guide her properly. That was his blunder.

Before the problem was getting bigger than this in the Academy, he had to guide Yoruka to act properly no matter what.

"—Yosh."

After he had decided that, he immediately took action.

Although, for Lux whose class and grade were different from Yoruka, there were still a lot of things that he didn't know.

Thus, first he had to gather accurate information.

Lux who bid farewell to Raigree returned to his classroom and sat down.

(Perhaps I should cancel my chores today as much as possible.....)

He was thinking of such thing while concentrating on the rest of his class.

—

## Part 2

"And so, because of that Nii-san is finally coming to me after this late?"

"Err, yes. Well....."

An awkward atmosphere was filling the cramped room to the brim.

He was in a room inside the girl dormitory after school.

It was the shared room of Airi and Noct.

It was a request from Raigree to guide Yoruka so she became accustomed to life in Academy, but first it was necessary to know about the situation of her class in first year.

Thinking so, Lux thought to hear about the story from Airi who was Yoruka's classmate, but the situation appeared to be more pressing than Lux thought.

"I'm very happy. To think that Nii-san will act considerately to someone like me even if just for a bit. I thought that surely Nii-san was foisting the matter of Yoruka-san completely to me while Nii-san isn't planning to do anything at all."

Airi was showing him a gentle smile, but her smile didn't reach her eyes.

In other words, his little sister was proclaiming that she had been fussing about Yoruka quite much since her enrollment into the Academy by Lux's hope.

"Let's stop with that much, Airi.. After all it's not like Lux-san was doing it maliciously."

Noct was sending a timely help to Lux who was receiving a gentle intimidation from Airi.

But, even with her best friend soothing her down, Airi still puffed her cheeks in dissatisfaction.

"Noct is spoiling Nii-san too much. It's because Nii-san has never thought about consequences since the past that he should be properly warned to make him reflect. After all if Nii-san isn't acting responsibly, it will make me terribly worried."

".....Perhaps that's also true. I was also troubled by Yoruka-san."

"Even though I thought you are helping me-!?"

Lux was crestfallen seeing Noct quickly changed side.

But, at the same time Noct who saw that was quietly bringing her face closer beside Lux.

"Forgive me Lux-san. I unconsciously made fun of you. Airi isn't as angry as she look, so please don't worry."

"Is....., that so?"

"Yes. Right now she is saying suchthing, but it was Airi's choice to not tell Lux-san about the problem. 'I don't want to put needless worry at Nii-san right now, so I will do something about the internal situation of the Academy', she said. She even came to me to consult about Yoruka-san's matter."

Noct whispered so. Within her usual composed expression, her lips looked just slightly loosened.

Airi who heard her instantly turned red and raised her voice in fluster.

"Wai-!? What are you saying Noct!? I, I was just——"

At the end her words turned ambiguous without denying it.

Recently Lux got a lot of work.



In addition of the normal class and practice, there was also his chores in the Academy and his activity as Syvalles member, not just that, as the country's representative—as a Seven Dragon Paladin, he was extremely busy.

Amidst that, since some time ago it seemed Airi was acting for Lux's sake in order to erase the friction between Yoruka and her surroundings.

In the end it was always like that.

Since Airi grew up, she would make fun of Lux or chiding him for his rash action, but in actuality she was always worrying about him.

"Thank you Airi. And Noct too."

"Yes. As Airi's close friend, I'm happy if Lux-san will understand."

"Uu....."

Seeing Lux's smile, Airi made a troubled expression and stared reproachfully.

After groaning for a while like that, before long she let out a long sigh.

".....Haa, I understand. Now about Yoruka-san, how much has Nii-san heard?"

Finally the concrete talk began.

Yoruka's problem that was talked by Airi who was spending time with her daily in the same class was mostly the same like what he heard from Instructor Raigree.

Fundamentally Yoruka wasn't going against the Academy's education policy, but here and there she would make a decision that violated the rule.

And then, she didn't show any sign of reflecting even if she was rebuked for doing that.

In addition she wouldn't match her pace with her classmates and didn't try to get close to them.

Even if there was student who talked to her trying to become her friend, it seemed Yoruka would turn them down with a smile saying 'I don't really understand something like that'.

Yoruka herself had the past of being a princess of the nation of Koto, but the people around her took distance from her because she was a strange existence that couldn't understand human's emotion.

Her ability as Drag-Knight was standing out, but as a human she couldn't do the 'normal' thing.

"We too are pondering hard of what we should do. Though when I am speaking with her, she will more or less listen to me because I am Nii-san's little sister."

"Yes. It doesn't seem like that she simply doesn't want to listen to what she is told. The point is that she doesn't know the way of living for the position of military cadet and how to interact with people."

Yoruka was out of place in the Academy wasn't simply because her individual character.

She didn't understand the way to live inside the society called school.

The way to interact with classmate, the way to act inside the order called school.

It was necessary for Lux who was her master to make her learned the normal thing as a person.

"Then, in the end I have to be the one to tell her?"

"Yes. Perhaps it would be better for Lux-san to spend as much time together with Yoruka-san in the Academy while teaching her that. Airi will sulk if Lux-san get too intimate with her, so I ask you to please act with that in mind."

"Noct keeps saying strange thing since some time ago, please stop it!"

Noct muttered that coolly, which was responded by Airi's yell with a red face.

Lux observed their exchange warmly while thinking of a plan.

For the time being he promised Airi and Noct that he would report the progress to them every day and left the room.

He would teach Yoruka the importance of rule in the Academy and how to interact with students and teachers.

Lux was thinking of how to do that while doing his chores.

"But, not just class, even my year is different from Yoruka, how should I make a point of contact with her.....?"

Even if he asked her to accompany him with his chores after school, she would be alone with only Lux, so there wasn't really any meaning in doing that.

If possible it would be better if he got the chance to teach Yoruka through class lesson or living together.

"—My, isn't this Lux-kun. You are making that kind of long face, has something happened again?"

"Ah....., good afternoon headmaster."

While he was sweeping at the backdoor of the school building, a familiar face of a woman passed through.

She was the big sister of his childhood friend Philuffy, a woman of blooming age who was serving as headmaster here, Relie Aingram.

She who was his acquaintance since the past smiled friendlily 'fufu' at him.

"Don't be like that, calling me headmaster at this place, it's fine if you call me Relie-san familiarly you know?"

"That's, normally isn't it the reverse?"

Even though they were inside the Academy's ground, she was like this.

Lux was smiling wryly at her informal attitude that was unthinkable for someone responsible for an academy of military cadets.

He also took the opportunity to try consulting her a little about the matter of Yoruka that was worrying him since some time ago.

"I see, certainly that method is interesting. In everything, one has to experience it first before being able to understand it."

Unexpectedly, Relie was giving her endorsement to the plan of spending time together with Yoruka in the same environment.

"But, as expected it's impossible. Our year is different in the first place, like that trying to have a school life with the same point of view——"

"It's possible."

The moment Lux scratched his head with a wry smile, such reply came to him.

"That's right isn't it, even if it's Relie-san, as expected that is.....  
——Wait, eeeeh!?"

"Let's try it. If it's also the request from none other than Lux, there is no way I can refuse it."

Relie nodded powerfully along with a smile that was filled with confidence.

Thus due to a trivial thought and a terrifying coincidence, this uproar begin.

—

## Part 3

An atmosphere of surprise and commotion was filling the classroom at the morning.

Inside the classroom of the Academy's first year, the girls were making a stir in bewilderment.

Even Airi and Noct were stiffened with a conflicted expression.

"E, err..... Then for one week from now on, Lux-kun from the second year is going to be entrusted into this class. Everyone, su, surely you all are confused of various things but, please get along well with each other."

No matter how anyone looked at it, the one who was the most bewildered was the female teacher in charge of the class.

Only a day after he consulted Relie.

A special schedule where Lux would receive class lesson for one week in the same first year class with Yoruka was realized very easily.

He was told that at the surface that this was for the first year to interact with male student in the prospect of turning the Academy into mixed school at the future.

This was an experiment for the first year students to experience that.

(No matter what, this is still too forcing it I think.....)

In order for Yoruka who couldn't adapt in the Academy to know about 'normal school life', Lux too would really spend a week as first year together with her.

Naturally Lux would fall behind schedule with his own class and practice during that time. Regarding that, it was scheduled to cover that with the supplementary lessons after school next week.

It seemed that Celis, Krulcifer, and Philuffy would help him there. Krulcifer with the general class lesson, Celis with Drag-Ride practice, and Philuffy in the practical skill of hand-to-hand combat.

'Eei, I want to help out Lux in something too-!'

It seemed that Lisha yelled like that when she knew it, but that was another story.

And because of that, this attempt that could even be called as mad was hurriedly started, but speaking of Yoruka, the person in question herself—,

"I'm happy that we are able to be together. If it's like this I can save the time to rush to Aruji-sama's side when I sense danger."

She was obviously the one who was the most unperturbed with this happening.

Far from feeling perturbed, she moved her desk to stick with Lux's desk beside her and softly nestled her body on him.

"Uwah!?"

The warmth of skin and the softness of breast could be felt from above the uniform.

At the same time the feminine scent tickling his nose cavity made Lux perplexed.

Her upward gaze emitted a bewitching sensuality. Her body twisted as though inviting him.

Even though she wasn't wearing that black outfit with high exposure rate, her behavior was enough to make a man's reasoning melted into puddle.

".....What are you doing Yoruka-san!? This is classroom! Nii-san too, please don't get lovestruck like that!"

Airi hurriedly leaned her body forward from the seat at opposite side and pulled at Lux's arm.

"My? Are you jealous, Airi-san? It's all right. I won't take Aruji-sama away from you."





"Tha, that's not what I'm saying at all!? Please understand the time and place!"

Airi who normally should be acting like a sheltered young lady in the Academy was losing her self-control.

".....Say, Noct. Could it be that it was always like this in this class?"

Lux looked behind him with a complicated expression. At the seat right behind him, the Triad member nodded briskly.

"Yes. ....Is what I want to say, but, No. It's more boisterous like this now that Lux-san has come."

"....."

He thought that Yoruka would be quieter if he was taking class at the same place with her, but it seemed it brought the opposite effect instead.

Yoruka's abnormality was getting even more standing out because she was conscious of Lux's existence.

The sudden happening of the only boy in the Academy coming to the first year class.

Right after the talk came out that Lux was coming here, the first year students turned a curious gaze at him and cheered joyfully, but in this situation where Yoruka was in confrontation against Airi, they were bewildered and watched quietly.

"Nii-san too, please scold her. You came here for that aren't you?"

Prompted by his little sister whose tone had roughened when he noticed, Lux nodded.

"Yo, Yoruka, get away a bit from me. The class will begin soon."

"Yes, Aruji-sama."

Her expression flashed into a pure smile and she obediently followed his words.

As expected it appeared that she was absolutely obedient to Lux's command.

When the scene settled down and the atmosphere relaxed, small voices could be heard from here and there.

"Hey, just now that girl, she called Lux-senpai with Aruji-sama——"

"Could it be, no it's certainly that kind of relationship between the two of them."

"....."

He wondered what was with this atmosphere.

Even though he came in order to make Yoruka fit into the class, the commotion became bigger instead.

(Or rather, if I remember right, everyone doesn't know about Yoruka's circumstance in detail.....)

The detail about Yoruka's special circumstance was known only by small part of people. The headmaster Relie, the members of Syvalles, as well as the teachers.

The majority of the female students only heard that Yoruka was 'a surviving servant that had been serving Lux since the time of the old empire'.

Furthermore with what had happened just now, the students became even more curious about the relationship of the two.

While Lux was thinking of such thing, the teacher cleared her throat.

"The, then, we are starting our lesson. Open the text book——"

".....Oh, no."

The matter of him receiving lesson in the first year students class was decided hurriedly, so he didn't have the teaching materials for it.

When he thought of asking Airi to share her book with him, a text book already existed right in front of him.

"Here Aruji-sama. I will offer you mine."

"Tha, thank you Yoruka—wait, what are you doing giving it wholly to me!? What about yours!?"

"It's unnecessary for me to accomplish my duty, so it's something fortunate that it can be of help for Aruji-sama."

"....."

Even Lux was troubled when she told him that with a cheerful smile.

"Err, that's..... I'm happy with Yoruka's feeling—but"

"Here Nii-san. I'll show you mine."

The moment Lux was hesitating of what to say, Airi brought her desk closer to him.

Thanks to that he was able to return Yoruka's text book and safely..... well, he couldn't go as far to claim that, but even so the class resumed.

"Fuu....."

Lux was patting his chest in relief inside his heart, but beside him Airi was glaring at him reproachfully.

\*Tap tap\* Her finger was pointing at the corner of her notebook. A small message was written there for Lux.

'It will be scolding later for Nii-san'

".....Haah"

Lux hung his head down after reading that strong line with dripping ink while passing through the first class.

—

## Part 4

He was worried what going to happen with his sudden change of classroom, but unexpectedly after that time was passing peacefully.

A somewhat restless atmosphere was flowing right after Lux arrived, but after seeing the confrontation between Yoruka and Airi, almost no student appeared to call out to Lux.

The students were observing the quarrel of the two while nonchalantly prompting at him. The atmosphere was reserved like that.

"Lux-senpai had participated in the tournament at the capital right? Please give me guidance at the practice."

"Is the impression in the second year's class different from here?"

"Which one is Lux-senpai's type, a younger or older girl?"

There were juniors who were talking to him here and there, but Yoruka didn't join into that conversation.

Rather, she was taking a step back and watching Lux from afar.

At the same time, Airi too was putting up her guard while stealing glances from the side.

Like this it was scary and the classmates were found it hard to make their move.

At time like this Lux was troubled at what he should do.

"Come to think of it, what is Lux-senpai's hobby?"

Then, a student suddenly asked such question to him. There Lux went into offense.

"Err, I was doing nothing but chores so I don't have anything like hobby but, what about you Yoruka?"

He abruptly addressed Yoruka who was some distance away.

It was his attempt to add Yoruka into the circle of conversation and familiarized her with her classmates, but,

".....I don't really have anything like that."

"Ah, I see....."

She flashed a bright smile and answered instantly.

Noct who saw that sighed quietly while Airi held her head.

However he wondered why.

Somehow, he felt a different impression that was different from usual from Yoruka's answer.

"More importantly, you there, can I ask you to shift slightly more to the right? You block the window and I cannot prepare against attack from outside."

"Ah, right. So, sorry."

After Yoruka pointed out with a gentle tone, the girl who was standing near the window moved away from there.

It seemed that she was observing from some distance away was to be vigilant toward outside so that Lux wouldn't get aimed by assassin.

"Say Yoruka.....here is inside the Academy, so you don't need to be that worried."

"That's also true. But, although it's not zero but there is still a chance."

".....Bu, but you see, right now is break time, talking with other friends——"

Please tell her more strongly.

The gaze from Airi with expression that seemed to be telling him that was painful.

Even so the current Lux was helpless to do anything throughout the morning class.

—

During the two days after that, Lux's endeavor didn't go well.

When he was taking lunch together with the first year students, "This is a good chance so allow me to test the food for poison" Yoruka said that and lightly ate Lux's meal before presenting it to him, after that, even when Lux was leaving his seat when it was time to change clothes into the pilot suit, she would try to change together with him saying that it was for his protection, and on top of all that, at the time when Lux's finger got cut by paper edge, she would put his finger into her mouth to disinfect it.

With such loyalty that made even Lux himself got red faced displayed in the open, the first year students who were watching from the side were getting heated up toward that stimulating exchange.

As the result—Yoruka wasn't developing to open her heart to her classmate or even trying to protect the rule, rather it was as though she was charging fiercely through the path of deterioration.

.....Strange.

Even though this was a plan for teaching Yoruka to be social, and yet her action was growing even worse by Lux coming to her side.

"Nii-san is naïve. Please warn her more severely."

"Yes. I'm asking Lux-san too before all the blood vessels in Airi's body burst."

The lunch break at the third day, Airi and Noct finally told him that.

But, he wondered why.

Lux wasn't really feeling like to do that.

"Um, certainly you two might be right but....."

Making use of his position as her master and restricted her action by commanding her.

Perhaps that was the shortest path.

However for some reason Lux was hesitating to do that.

\*GOoOON\* The sound of bell resounded inside the school building, telling the end of the lunch break.

The next class was Drag-Ride practice.

Airi who was a civil official candidate would have a different class. Because of that they would part here temporarily.

"Then Nii-san. Please be very, very careful to not do anything strange."

"Right. Let's go, Noct."

Lux nodded at Airi's reminder and stood up from his seat.

He hurried to the practice ground so that he wouldn't be late for class.

—



## Part 5

"Today, I have a little request for Yoruka."

"My, what could it be? Aruji-sama doesn't need to be that reserved. If it's the command of no one else by Aruji-sama, I will obey it right away."

Afternoon—in the middle of the practice ground.

It that place where the students who had changed into their pilot suit gathered, Lux instructed Yoruka in a certain matter.

"Can you not get too close to me in the middle of practice? That's, as expected the visibility in this place is great, so there is no need to be that worried about my security."

"—That, might be true."

Yoruka nodded once with a serious face and showed a thinking gesture for a bit.

"But, I believe that we shouldn't let our guard down, just in case. There is also various kinds of Abyss, the modus operandi of the enemy is also becoming ingenious."

"Yes. But for today, won't Yoruka teach your technique to everyone else? Of course, it's okay if you only teach them what they can possibly do. I want you to pay attention not just at me, but to everyone else too."

"....."

Lux finally told her that clearly.

He wasn't leaving her to her own independence, but urging her to cooperate with everyone else.

Yoruka was hesitating for a few seconds, but before long she nodded quietly.

"I understand. I'm not confident, but if it's Aruji-sama's command, then I'll do it with pleasure."

Lux felt slightly guilty seeing her figure responding to him with a smile.

He wondered if in the end Yoruka would be able to do it.

In the first place at the practice for the first year, Noct reported to him that Yoruka wasn't able to even carry out a proper mock battle in a battle between pair.

It wasn't simply because Yoruka was unable to match the pace of her partner.

Compared to a first year military cadet, Yoruka's skill was too outstanding, she didn't mesh well with her partner, and she also finished off her opponent instantly.

Of course, Divine Drag-Ride basically wasn't used in practice, in exchange Yoruka was using a general purpose Drag-Ride Drake, but even so the difference in skill was still that wide.

(Even so, there is no other way but making her to give it a try.)

Just in case, Lux was observing Yoruka at the corner of his gaze so that he could follow up on her anytime while beginning his own practice too.

Confirmation of the basic motion, the fundamental of the basic motion.

Confirmation of weapon use, the combination of weapon and basic motion.

It was a class that was focused on practicing the basic that was aimed for first year student, so Lux was mainly giving advice to the other students.

He was teaching them courteously while frequently paying attention to Yoruka.

"—Because of that, consecutive attack in midair can be done like this."

"E, even if you said that it can be done....."

".....Yes. In the first place, attacking once normally is the best that we can do."

It seemed that Yoruka was trying to do her best in her own way, but it didn't look like it was going well.

(However, it looks like she is doing her best just like I told her.)

Lux thought that it was a move in the right direction.

To begin with it was important to start first.

(Later, perhaps I should discuss it with Yoruka about what to do so she can give better advice.)

Lux was doing mock battle in pairs against the girls while thinking such thing. It was then his gaze suddenly met with Yoruka who was wearing Drake at some distance away from him.

".....Eh?"

Right after that—the gaze of Yoruka who was also doing mock battle at some distance away was moving slightly to the side.

It happened in the situation when each of them was doing their own respective mock battle in a form that was like real battle.

It was a special situation inside the spacious practice ground, where four mock battles were carried out simultaneously.

The battle area of each was divided by lines, they were all taking enough distance from each other, but rarely a trouble like stray shot would occur.

This time a Wyvern that was training at the neighboring area got flipped by Cannon's impact and caused a situation where it was flying horizontally toward Lux who was some distance away.

"Lux-senpai-!?"

The yell of female students could be heard from the audience seat.

If it was an energy light bullet, the barrier would block it, it couldn't block the Drag-Ride's frame itself.

But, if it was the defensive ability of Lux who had the nickname Weakest Undeclared at the capital's tournament, he would be able to react properly even at this unexpected situation.

(It's fine. I can dodge—no)

How to safely catch the first year girl who got sent flying?

During less than two seconds, Lux had the composure to think that far—but,

".....-!? Yoruka, don't!? That's—"

A motion that was suddenly occurring at the corner of his eyes caused Lux to spontaneously yell.

Perhaps seeing that the Drag-Ride that was sent flying was going to collide with Lux, Yoruka who was fighting at the neighboring area drove her Drake and flew in between.

"KYAAAAAH.....!?"

Lux thought to stop her, but he didn't make it in time.

The Blade that Yoruka swung repelled away the Drag-Ride of the girl who was flying toward Lux midway, and it struck the ground.

"——!?"

‘Oh no.’ Lux felt regret, but it was already too late.

"The student there! What are you doing!? Slashing at student who was sent flying by inertia is—"

"I was only protecting Aruji-sama."

Yoruka answered like that to the male instructor who noticed only just now with an expression that wasn't regretful at all.

Lux and Noct hurriedly explained the situation, but most of the students there didn't understand the situation correctly.

A student who only might collided with Lux was purposefully struck down.

The majority of the students surely interpreted it like that.

"To think, that it would become like this....."

After that, Yoruka's action was criticized by the instructors as a dangerous act, and she was made to write a written apology.

The third day passed amidst the incident that made Lux let out a long sigh.

—

## Part 6

"Haa..... Do I really have to say it just as expected?"

A night had passed after the aforementioned incident, it was the fourth day.

It seemed that Yoruka was scolded harshly by the teachers, but it seemed Yoruka didn't put up with it like usual.

He understood that her personality was like that since the beginning, but as expected, it couldn't stay like this.

'Nii-san. Please stop stalling and scold her already. Tell her not to act excessively for Nii-san's sake and think of the surrounding, scold her harshly. If she won't follow it, then please punish her. If even after that she won't listen to what she was told, at that time——'

She should be made to leave the Academy while she still hadn't caused any bigger problem.

That would be the best path for the Academy and Yoruka. Airi who knew about the incident told him that.

Certainly Lux also understood about the necessity of that, but——.

"A punishment huh....."

Honestly, it was troubling.

Even though he wasn't good at scolding other people, now he had to do something like punishing other people.

When he was entrusted with taking care of a selfish child in one of his chores, he gave a verbal warning, but as expected he never raised his hand toward the child.

"Furthermore, Yoruka is a girl one year younger than me....."

It was difficult to give a punishment that wasn't just a mere violence, he didn't have any good idea for that.

Even so, not doing anything would be just escaping from responsibility.

If he only wished to grant Yoruka a place to belong in the new kingdom while not having the motivation to get actually involved in her problem, it would be extremely irresponsible of him as her master.

Even so, for some reason Lux didn't feel any motivation to punish Yoruka strongly.

"Kuh....., I'm no good like this. If I don't properly chastise Yoruka——"

When Lux was muttering that while working in the corridor after school,

"My, what does Aruji-sama mean by that?"

"Uwaaaaah!? —Wait, Yoruka!? Since when you were there!?"

Lux jumped in surprise when a voice addressed him suddenly from behind.

When he turned around, behind him a girl in black outfit was standing with a gentle smile on her face.

"Yes. Just now, I heard the story from Airi-san. I was told that Aruji-sama is looking for me."

Lux took a deep breath even while feeling surprised, then he directed a serious gaze at the girl in front of him.

"Err.....that's, I have something to talk with you. I cannot speak it here, so when my chores are over, if possible at a place where there are no other people——"

"Is that so? Then, I will search for a place that we might be able to borrow."

"Ri, right, please."

Like that, Lux parted with her for the moment and then he let out a sigh.

If possible he wanted to only use words, if that didn't work then he would use other way.

He would punish her and correct her mistake properly as her master.

"I have to manage somehow no matter what——"

Lux resolved himself in a corner of his mind while continuing his chores.

—



## Part 7

And then, at night.

He had finished taking dinner and bath. It was when the time was moving into the period for sleeping in the girl dormitory.

Lux had received a message from Yoruka that was told to him through Noct. He headed to the underground prison inside the Academy's ground following the message.

Underground prison—.

When Lux came to this Academy for the first time, he was misunderstood as a peeping tom and was put inside there.

He was told that it seemed that place was what Yoruka chose by herself.

The place was dark and cold. It wasn't suited for talking. He wondered if there was a reason why she was choosing such place purposefully.

Lux was thinking of such thing while going down the stair to the underground.

When he opened the wooden door, he saw the iron bars at the other side and the silhouette of Yoruka inside it.

The moonlight was faintly shining in from the upper window, but the room was gloomy and he couldn't see well.

Just, it felt like Yoruka's expression was different from usual.

"I've been waiting, Aruji-sama."

Her voice was gentle, filled with deep affection.

Her peculiar trait, her asymmetrically colored eyes were shining inside the darkness.

"Yoruka.....do you understand what is it I'm going to talk about?"

Lux said that with a serious tone so that he didn't look like he was angry.

Then Yoruka's gaze dropped to the floor, and she murmured somewhat seductively.

"Yes, I know. It's about how I went against Aruji-sama's command isn't it? I had heard from Airi-san. That Aruji-sama is going to punish me."

She went against Lux's instruction in the practice ground and went near him.

She tried to protect Lux who was approached by danger with excessive force and did a dangerous act against other girls.

"I'm not that angry, but even so I have to scold you. If you won't listen about how you should act in the Academy even after I told you, then at that time——"

Lux hesitated at the end of his sentence.

Yoruka spoke the answer at that opening.

"I will be punished—is that it? It's fine, I have resolved myself."

Right after Yoruka replied so, the lightning inside the prison was lit up.

At that moment when the darkness was cleared slightly, Lux's head froze.

"Yes. But I——.....wait, EEEEEEEEEEEH!?"

A surprised scream echoed inside the prison.

Yoruka's appearance was mostly naked.

In contrast with her glossy black hair, her white skin was bewitchingly standing out.

Below she was only wearing a piece of panty and a ribbon that was tying her hair.

From the leather choker under her chin, a small dark grey chain was hanging down, both her hands were handcuffed.

Her moderately big breasts were sandwiched by her own arms, emphasizing the bulges.

It was as though she was a beautiful slave girl imprisoned inside a jail waiting to receive humiliation.

Such abnormal scene was unfolding before Lux's eyes.

"Wha, wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-what are you doing Yoruka!? Just what in the world this—!?"

Lux immediately backed away and yelled with a red face.

"I heard that Aruji-sama would bestow me a punishment, so I prepared various things. —Now, please be compassionate."

Yoruka said that while handing him a whip. No matter how he looked, her expression wasn't that of someone who would be punished.

Her cheeks were flushed, 'haa haa' sweet breath that was deliriously feverish were slipping out from her mouth.

She was anticipating, intoxicated, and excited with what would happen after this.

She was demanding punishment from her master with such bewitching expression.

"No, not that, isn't this strange in various senses!? What's with this whip!? Why are there this many candles!? Other than that, there is also something that looks like a stand for crucifixion!?"

There was also a wooden horse behind her that he didn't know what it would get used for, but the part that was for sitting was shaped like triangle.

By the way, it seemed Yoruka discovered these tools from a sealed storage room.

Originally this Academy was also a military facility of the old empire, so perhaps they were used for interrogation in the past.

But, as expected it was unforeseen that such things would show up here.

"Now, Aruji-sama. Please punish me. Disgrace me, hit me with that whip, drip candle on me, please discipline me."

"—!?"

Yoruka twirled around and put both her handcuffed hands on the cold stone wall.

And then she slowly pushed out his butt that was only covered by a single piece of panty toward him.

At the same time she looked back at him with a flushed smile. Lux stiffened with his hand still holding the whip.

‘Wha, wha-wha-wha-wha-what to do?’

Although it is Yoruka herself who wished for this, is it really fine for me to give this kind of punishment?

No wait, in the first place will this become punishment for Yoruka?

Or rather, if it got exposed that I’m doing something like this in the Academy, I think this is exactly the thing that would make someone get expelled.’

But, the sweet temptation for Yoruka who was pleading for punishment by herself caused Lux’s heart to beat painfully. His head was getting hazily blank.

".....-!? Wai-, I remember that I have a business! You tidy up this place properly later-!"

Lux somehow managed to say just that and rushed up through the stair and retreated outside the building.

He was gasping for breath while his shoulders dropped in dejection.

"Perhaps, this is a little bit beyond me....."

It was also hard to imagine that Yoruka would change because she got punished, but he never imagined that she would go that far.

Or rather, it even felt like that Yoruka herself was wishing for that.

He believed that she wasn't causing the incident this time because she wanted to get punished but—.

"Haa, what should I do....."

Lux looked up at the moon from the courtyard and let out a sigh.

At this rate, sooner or later Yoruka might be forced to leave the Academy.

Perhaps ordering her to not have anything to do with him at all anymore within the Academy was also one choice.

"However, I—"

"Thank you for your hard work today, Lux-san."

".....Noct?"

Right after Lux muttered to himself, the girl who was his junior appeared from behind him.

Noct who was also cooperating with him in the matter this time continued her words with her usual calm expression.

"Yes. I had something I was a bit concerned with and did investigation in the Drag-Ride hangar. From how Lux-san looked, it seems that the punishment for Yoruka didn't go well."

"It's pathetic, but as expected such punishment was——"

Lux recalled the lascivious scene just now and his cheeks reddened.

But, with a calm expression Noct continued with her bland and quiet words.

"Are you two unable to understand each other? Or else, Lux-san felt as though you are unable to grasp her true feeling at all and cannot understand her?"

"....."

Lux fell silent when Noct hit the bull's eye.

Certainly that was what he was worrying about.

"Perhaps that is so. She isn't suited with school life. If thinking about the interest of both parties, perhaps it would be better if she drop out of the Academy. But——"

Noct suddenly changed her tone and stared straight at Lux's eyes.

"I have obtained just one material to know about her true feeling. It shouldn't be too late to make the decision even after discussing about it with her."

Noct said that and presented something to Lux. It was a written report about a weapon's repair that she obtained from a mechanic in the Drag-Ride hangar.

"This is——!?"

Lux saw it and held his breath spontaneously.

The truth of the commotion this time was written there.

—

## Part 8

The next day.

The fifth day where Lux was spending time together with Yoruka and others in the first year classroom—the last day. Then after school.

Yoruka was quieter than usual when in the classroom. In order to talk with her, Lux borrowed a parlor of the school building.

\*Knock knock\* When Lux heard the knocking sound, he invited her inside.

His heart was beating fast from wondering if she would come with an amazing appearance again, but she was wearing her usual black clothes.

"Good evening, Yoruka."

"Thank you for your hard work today, Aruji-sama. What business do you have with me today?"

Her appearance stood out under the lamp's light.

Her asymmetrically colored eyes, her black hair, her smooth white skin.

The air of the young man's servant who possessed a bewitching beauty was different from usual.

"That's, there is something that I want to ask.....it's about the incident the day before yesterday."

"Yes. I understand. I will accept any kind of punishment willingly. Even if it's expulsion from this Academy——"

Yoruka responded immediately with a smile that didn't regret anything.

But, Lux's words were different.

"—I'm sorry I didn't notice, what happened at that time."

"Yes.....?"

Yoruka tilted her head with an astonished expression that she rarely showed.

"You hit away the Wyvern flying toward me with the intention to avoid incident right? Because you understood that I was planning to catch that girl's Drag-Ride, you went to help to avoid the worst case from happening."

"....."

"There was a report from the mechanic in the Drag-Ride hangar. The base of the Blade that the girl who got blown away was holding had a crack on it that was hard to see. Perhaps it was fractured because it received a strong impact. If I caught her at that time, the blade might break from the impact. It was possible the fragment could stab me. That was why, you tried to prevent that right?"

"....."

Certainly Yoruka was worrying about Lux's safety, but when he gave her a command, she would entrust it to him to a certain degree.

As expected, there was a reason why at that time she reacted overly.

Even Lux didn't notice it until Noct told him.

"—It's not something that Aruji-sama has to apologize for. It's the fact that I broke your order."

Yoruka made a troubled smile and muttered that.

"Rather than that, why didn't Aruji-sama tell me to keep away from you during these few days, just like your younger sister advised? I'm wondering about that."

‘So she asked’, Lux smiled wryly inside his heart.



It was quite dangerous to keep a secret from this girl who was able to erase her presence.

"If Aruji-sama told me stop guarding me, don't fuss about me, just ignore me—if Aruji-sama only told me anything like that, I would do so as you commanded. And yet, Aruji-sama didn't say anything. Why is that?"

"Because, if I do that, surely it would be harsh for Yoruka."

Yoruka asked Lux while tilting her head. In respond to that, Lux smiled with a lonely look.

"It's the only thing that Yoruka feel you want to do so much. Telling you to not do it is the same like denying you something that you think you can do. That's why, I cannot just one-sidedly tell Yoruka to stop when it's something that you do because you like it."

"....."

This girl decided that herself was a toll and served Lux who was her master.

He gave her his opinion and order in regard to her method and the detail.

But, giving an order to her to stop doing that act itself, that was the only thing that he didn't want to do no matter what.

Continuously being an even better tool due to their contract as master and servant.

That was the only connection possessed by Yoruka who was said that she 'didn't possess human heart'. Lux didn't give that order because he knew that.

"But still, if something like this time happen, tell me properly. Surely you were covering for me so that it won't become my miss, but I won't understand something like a weapon is in the verge of breaking if you don't tell me. That's why, can you just promise me to do that from here on?"

"—Yes. I swear, Aruji-sama."

Yoruka formed a faint smile on her lips, and then she reverently kneeled and bowed to him.

With that, the case this time was concluded.

".....Haa, it can't be helped."

The moment Lux thought that, there was a presence outside the door that made a voice.

The presence entered inside the parlor. It was the two girls who were deeply involved with the case this time.

"Airi!? Also Noct too, why are you two——"

"Because it's Nii-san who is really soft on girl that we are talking about here, so there is no way we can entrust this to you isn't that right? That's why, we only came to check on the situation for a bit."

"Yes. Though I think you can just say it honestly that you are worried about the two of them."

"Please just stay quiet Noct-!?"

Airi was flustered to hide her embarrassment, then she turned back toward Yoruka and,

"Well, at the very least I understand that you are really taking action for Nii-san's sake. So just for this time, I'll specially forgive you. Also——"

Airi coughed once and then continued.

"Just this once, I'll become your friend only for form's sake. Because if I don't do that, it doesn't look like you will be able to go through the school life properly."

"Yes. I also feel the same. I too am not good in social relations but, best regards."

".....Is it alright, Aruji-sama?"

"Yes. I'm also requesting you, please become these two's friend."

After Lux smiled, Yoruka quietly stared at the face of the two girls.

"Please take care of me. I don't understand anything about what I should do but——"

Yoruka's words were like usual.

Even so, it might be a step forward just from having her recognizing other as friend like this.

"That's great."

Lux let out a sigh of relief, but right after that, Yoruka suddenly turned her gaze toward him.

She quietly drew close to him and her finger stroked his chest. Then she smiled bewitchingly at him.

"But, it's a bit unfortunate. Even though this time I was holding expectation that Aruji-sama will personally punish me."

"-.....!? Tha, that's, this time there was that after all....., as expected next time——"

"Nii-san want to do it if there is a chance? That kind of indecent punishment, to Yoruka-san?"

The moment Lux spoke ambiguously, Airi whispered smilingly with shadow covering her eyes.

"Wait, why do you know about that!? Even though it was only me who went there!?"

"Yes. We helped out with the tidying up. I thought that it wasn't Lux-san's hobby but——the nature of man is something deep."

"You are wrong-!? I only wanted to say 'next time let's choose a different way of punishment', that's all!"

"My? Does Aruji-sama think up of a way to better disgrace me than that? Then, right away——"

"That's why!? I'm telling you that's not iiiiit!?"

For some reason, even Yoruka joined up Airi and Noct at teasing him.

The first interaction that was fitting for fellow friends was created between the girls.

# **Chapter 7: Triad Chapter – The Chore Prince's Rest Day**

## Part 1

"Please wake up, master——"

There was the sensation of his body being shaken.

The indifferent voice of a girl and her breathing were gently tickling Lux's ear.

".....It's quite hard to wake you up. I heard from Airi that Lux-san is someone who has no problem waking up early though."

(Eh.....?)

Lux was harboring a small doubt inside his warm drowsiness.

From what his sleepy eyes briefly glanced, he didn't know who this girl was.

But, the girl's tone had a trait that was familiar to him.

"Perhaps it's my method to wake him up that is bad? Then, I'll try imitating Airi. Onii-chan, please wake up."

It was a quiet voice that sounded calm and had no intonation.

Lux had recollection of this peculiar way of talking in roundabout way that was somewhat different from his little sister Airi who acted like a respectable young lady.

When he slowly opened his heavy eyelids, he could see that girl's face.

Lux felt relieved and his tension slackened, but at that moment an intense out of place feeling assaulted him.

"Something is different. Please wake up, Lux-san——"

".....Wait, Noct! What are you doing here-!?"

Lux leaped up in a flash from his bed and questioned the girl in front of him.

His consciousness instantly woke up.

The girl who was his junior in this Academy—his little sister's best friend, and a member of the famous trio in the Academy—the Triad, was standing there as though it was only natural.

The girl with black hair and deep green eyes slightly opened her eyes wide, but her usual composure immediately returned and she quietly took a step back.

"Yes. Good morning, master."

Noct softly closed her eyes and bowed toward Lux.

"Ah, that, good morni—.....not that! Just what are you doing here!?"

"Just as Lux-san see, I only came to wake you up though?"

"No, that's not what I meant. More importantly your appearance—?"

Yes,

He didn't notice that the girl before him was Noct for a moment was caused by her outfit.

She was wearing a maid headdress and a cotton dress with black basic tone.

The maid appearance with pure white apron that gave a sense of cleanliness really suited her.

Even though her figure was enveloped with graceful elegance, her sex appeal could also be vaguely felt, causing his heart to spontaneously skip a beat.

However Lux stared fixedly at her, wondering just why she was dressing like that.

"No. Unfortunately, I cannot answer the wish of the perverted master who wants the skirt's length to be shortened."

"you're wrong!? What kind of person Noct is setting me up inside your mind!? Tha, that's not it, why are you dressing like that——"

"Yes. Before explaining, first I recommend master to wash your face. The breakfast will still be some time ahead. Sharis and Tillfur are already waiting outside."

Noct obstinately didn't answer Lux's question and she prompted him indifferently.

"Eh.....?"

When Lux opened his room's curtain while still wearing his sleepwear, he could see Tillfur below wearing casual clothing in front of the dormitory's door.

When she noticed Lux, she looked up at him with her bright smile and,

"Lux-chi, morniiiiing!"

She waved her hand at him cheerfully.

"....."

Lux responded to her with an awkward smile and he recalled the plan for today. He turned around.

"Noct, you see."

"Yes. What is it, master."

"I completely don't understand why Noct is dressing like that."

Incidentally, it was also a puzzle why she was calling him master instead of the usual "Lux-san".

"Yes. Could it be, master wish to help you changing clothes?"



"I cannot change clothes in front of a girl who is my junior, that's why get out for now please!?"

After Lux yelled with flushed cheeks, Noct listened to his order with a slightly disappointed face.

Lux let out a long sigh at the morning that gave him the premonition of a flurried day.

—

## Part 2

"—Then in the end, today the requests from everyone else were gone?"

Ten-odd minutes later after the uproar of his waking up.

Lux who changed into his uniform and went outside was being shaken inside the small coach.

As expected, the members of Triad were riding together with him.

The oldest one and the leader, the third year student, Sharis.

The bright mood maker, the second year student, Tillfur.

And then, the calm and quiet best friend of his little sister, Noct. These three people.

"Sorry to spring this to you out of nowhere. Perhaps you are taken aback because the chores requests are suddenly disappearing, but we too wanted to surprise you."

Sharis who was sitting beside Lux chuckled at his question.

Today was a rest day for him after so long.

In the Academy that was nurturing Drag-Knights, the daily schedule could caused fatigue to pile up easier than expected.

Thus, in the case the students used Drag-Ride consecutively over and over, sometimes a rest period that was called as rest day would be especially prepared for the students.

At present, Lux was receiving various requests from the students and staffs in the Academy, but normally he couldn't fulfill all of them because of the great number.

Thus today Lux promised to go get the piling up requests from Tillfur who was managing the requests from the students, but—.

"Yes. The works that are the portion for today had been done beforehand altogether by us Triad. Of course, we avoided the requests that can only be done by Lux-san and collected it for you to be done later."

It seemed that they had planned and carried it out from before this.

"I have talked a bit with Tillfur, but it appear that you are working a bit too much everyday. You planned to work even at this rare rest day right? That's why today as your close friends, we formed a plan so that Lux-kun can properly rest—that's how it is."

".....That's, I'm really happy hearing that. But, everyone, your appearance—?"

Lux nodded in understanding at Sharis's words while asking.

Lux was in his uniform like usual, but the appearance of the Triad who were accompanying him was all over the place for some reason.

Sharis was wearing a dashing butler uniform that he wasn't used to seeing.

Tillfur was wearing a cute casual clothes with high exposure rate for autumn.

Noct was in chic and straight maid appearance the same like before.

"This is for the amusement after we arrive at my villa."

"Ha, haa....."

Sharis's smile was filled with implication. Lux could only respond with an expression that was completely at loss for words.

She was fundamentally someone with leadership capacity and good with looking after other people, but she was strangely a festival lover and tended to act theatrically, or something like that.

She formed the team called Triad and purposefully volunteered to act as the Academy's vigilance committee. There were also good times like when Lux was enrolled into the Academy at first, together with Lisha she planned the welcome party for him.

"But, why are we going as far as going out?"

A simple question suddenly surfaced in his mind.

"If it's for me to rest, then isn't it fine even if do it in the Academy—?"

Sharis smiled proudly when he asked her that.

"Fufuh. It looks like we know about Lux-kun better than you know yourself."

"Lux-chi. Even if it's a rest day you won't have anything to do after all, and when a request from someone came to you, you will surely accept it. Not just the dorm mother, the other girls will also come to you with requests for sure."

"Yes. Master need to learn the option called 'I refuse' for a bit more, and then please actually apply it."

"....."

Sharis smiled wryly, while Tillfur and Noct turned a fixed stare at him and muttered that.

(I, I cannot deny it.....)

Honestly, he was aware of that himself.

It appeared, these girls who were being considerate of Lux seeing how many requests coming at him were in the right.

The coach the four were riding was running along with gentle rocking.

Amidst the calm early morning air where people had only just gotten waking up, Lux was being shook by the coach's rocking while feeling a

subtle guilt as though he was skipping off work.

—

## Part 3

"—We have been waiting for your arrival. Thank you for your work, Sharis-ojousama."

The residence district of Cross Field's second block.

In front of the pure white big mansion that had garden and pond in it, the guards and maids were welcoming their arrival.

"This is the house used by my family members like my father or relatives when they come to Cross Field. But today it's completely reserved for you and us."

Lux reconfirmed once more, that the girls in the Academy were fundamentally noble young ladies as expected.

Especially Sharis, even among the Triad, she was the daughter of the vice commander of the new kingdom's military, so perhaps this was only natural.

"Sorry for the trouble. Leave the rest to us. We only need one guard for the outside."

"Yes. Please take care."

The maids and guards bowed in respond to Sharis's thanks, then they left.

"Eh—?"

The servants of the house where they were going to spend their time at after this were going home early for some reason.

Lux tilted his head wondering what was the meaning of this. Then Sharis who was wearing butler uniform walked ahead and opened the door for him.

"Now, welcome. Lux-dono, please take a rest peacefully for today here."

Lux smiled wryly at Sharis's excessively theatrical gesture.

"Could it be, everyone is dressed like that because....."

"Yes. For this whole day, we will take care of Lux-san as your servants."

"Waaa, how envious. To be able to be accompanied by three girls who are this cuteee. ....Something like that, that's why, Lux-chi too don't hold back at all okay?"

Noct who nodded indifferently and Tillfur who gave him a thumb up cheerfully.

"We are finally inviting you for a break after much trouble. Doing it normally won't be interesting right? You are a former prince after all. I thought that this kind of idea won't be bad occasionally."

".....Because of that, Sharis-senpai dressed as butler like that?"

"Well yeah. There was that servant of missy Krulcifer, Alterize wasn't it? I also want to try dressing like her at least once. Does it suit me?"

"Then, Noct is——"

"In the first place my background is from the family of servants that are serving Sharis's family—the Baltshift house. This is my primary appearance outside the Academy."

".....Why is it only Tillfur who is wearing casual clothes?"

It was only his girl classmate who was wearing casual clothing that consisted of black innerwear that was covered with sleeveless tunic

Her short pants had two stylish belts coiling around, and her wrists were adorned with slender rings.

It was an appearance that was fitting for the lively Tillfur, but her healthy shoulders and thighs that were boldly exposed felt defenseless somehow. It made his heart beat really fast.

"It won't be fun even if there are two people dressed as maid see. And so, my role is as the young lady who is Lux-chi's playmate, how's that?"

Seeing Tillfur winking at him in delight, Lux was convinced.

"In the end, everyone is simply doing whatever you want isn't it!?"

After gathering breath for a moment, he retorted with his all.

"Fuu, it can't be helped that we got found out."

Sharis shrugged and responded with a cheerful laugh.

Really, this trio was really interesting and troubling.

However, somehow he was also feeling a bit amused.

This kind of 'playing' with friends of the same generation was something he had never done until now after all.

Until now, Lux had no friend who would do something like this for him.

"But, our feeling that wish to entertain you is the real thing. That's why, right, we will give you the command right to make one request to each of us. Just say any demand that you like."

"Command right, .....is it?"

"By the way, it's a right that is only for today. You have to use it up properly okay?"

These girls who were his friends would accept Lux's personal command.

Honestly speaking, it was an act that Lux found it the most difficult to do, but now that it had come to this, going along with it was only proper.

While Lux was thinking of what he should request, Sharis who was standing beside him suddenly smiled mischievously and whispered into Lux's ear.

".....But, please be moderate with perverted wish okay? After all we too are still innocent virgin. It doesn't feel like we will be able to respond to your expectation well."



"What are you saying right in the morning!? Ma, making that kind of request, I'm not even think——"

Lux went red until his ears instantly and yelled.

"You heard that both of you! It seems Lux-kun is still pure at heart you know? Let's entertain him without any worry!"

Sharis showed a congenial smile and said that toward Tillfur and Noct.

"Wait, just what are you ascertaining from me!/"

"Aa, I'm glad. There is also that Yoruka girl after all, so recently I'm feeling a bit uneasy you knooow"

For some reason Tillfur was patting down her chest looking relieved from the bottom of her heart.

"Yes. I think I can also make a good report to Airi."

"Why are you taking memo like that!? Stop it!"

Lux spontaneously yelled seeing Noct writing smoothly using feather pen on the paper in her hand.

"Now, let's quickly prepare breakfast. Lux-kun, after choosing coffee or tea, just relax easily there."

"Please don't behave like a servant as though you only just remember about it!"

Lux was escorted inside the villa with such lively mood.

—

## Part 4

After the four finished their breakfast, they enjoyed a light after meal rest.

Lux proposed to help out with tidying up like washing plates and so on, but Noct who was in charge of the housework denied him gently.

"Master, please rest at ease."

"No, it's fine to call me Lux just like usual.....or rather, is there a meaning in this role distribution?"

Somehow, it would feel more relaxing for Lux if they interacted with him like usual, so he spontaneously said that.

"There is. Lux-kun was chosen as princess Lizsharte's knight. It doesn't matter even if you are a former imperial family of the old empire or a criminal—when you obtained that title, in the future there is a high possibility that you too will have subordinates. It will be fine if you think of this as rehearsal for that."

Sharis in her butler uniform was replying like that from right behind the sofa where Lux was sitting.

Her words themselves might be indeed correct.

But....., somehow it also felt like it was only the surface reason.

"Thaat's how it is, it's fine to use us without reservation for killing time you know? Even though I look like this, in regards to playing I'm more able than any other."

Tillfur puffed up her chest proudly. Lux smiled wryly seeing that.

In the end, it seemed like this was a really loose master and servant relationship.

"I guess, thank you. But, right now I have no request yet I think."

"Lux-chi, normally what are you doing in your holiday? Like when you were still a prince, or before you came to our Academy."

"Hmmm....."

Lux hesitated to answer Tillfur's question.

Honestly speaking, he couldn't really remember.

When he was still living at imperial court, he only had the memory of playing with Philuffy, after that he stretched himself thin with Drag-Ride practice or studying.

In his life of chores after the coup d'etat, he had no memory other than sleeping because of his fatigue in his holiday.

Speaking of holiday for Lux, his impression about it was instead the time of working in service business.

"Then, how about you spend your time today for your hobby?"

Sharis gave an advice while Lux was crossing his arms and pondering.

But, Lux could only smile stiffly.

"I, cannot remember. If I'm forced to say, then searching for odd job's tool or something——"

".....Uwah, so you used even your free time for your chores."

Tillfur showed a twitching expression at Lux's answer.

"Yes. It seems that Lux-san is ill. The chores nature has been completely instilled into your very bone."

"Cruel-!?"

"Pardon my rudeness master. My true feeling unconsciously slipped out."

"....."

‘What’s going on with the thing about these three entertaining me.....?’

While Lux was hurt by Noct’s words, Sharis suddenly talked from behind Lux.

"Lux-kun. What is called hobby is something that you discover. Was there anything that attract your personal interest while you were playing or working in the past?"

"Eerrr....."

Even if she told him that, he couldn’t remember anything.

"Uwaa..... Sometimes Lux-chi will give off feeling like that but—, could it be you have never thought about your own enjoyment at all?"

"N, no such thing—but"

Even though he tried to deny it in panic, he was shocked of himself who couldn’t deny it somewhere inside.

"Master. The cleaning up is finished."

While they were talking like that, the <sup>Noct</sup>maid who finished the clean up came to his side.

In the end they couldn’t decide what to do. The three sat together on the sofa.

"....."

When Lux was falling silent with a troubled look, the Triad began discussing in whispers.

Before long it appeared they reached a conclusion. Sharis clapped Lux’s shoulder lightly.

"Yosh, the schedule today is decided."

"Eh.....?"

"Let's stimulate the feeling of enjoying spare time that Lux-kun has completely forgotten. —And so, we will have you accompany us in our hobby today. Is that fine?"

"Ye, yes!"

Lux spontaneously nodded at Shari's confident invitation.

After that the four immediately arranged their appearance and departed to the center of second block's center.

—

## Part 5

"—Then first, will you accompany me with my hobby?"

The place they were heading with Sharis's recommendation was a corner where there were a lot of shops lining up even in the commercial district.

There was a shop there that although small, it was standing with a high class feeling. When they entered, a mysterious smell was drifting their way.

Colorful glass jars were lined up on the shelves. Even just the containers looked fairly pricey.

"This shop, could it be—?"

"Oh, have Lux-kun came to a similar shop like this before?"

Sharis who said that took one of the small jar and opened the lid.

She lightly soaked a paper strip inside it and then presented it to him. Lux immediately understood what it was.

"—Is this, perfume?"

"Perfume, then there is also pomade. I like the rose aroma, but it's quiet expensive, and if you aren't careful with the amount, it will only smell gaudy, so there is also a trick in using it."

"Syvalles's training will make you sweat a lot, so this kind of thing is really useful you know?"

"Yes. I and Tillfur also have Sharis to choose different perfume and pomade for each of us."

"Hee....."

Lux though it unexpected inside his heart.

He knew that Sharis liked rose, and because of that she preferred perfume and pomade of that fragrance, but he didn't know that Tillfur and Noct also received theirs from her.

"Well, we aren't using it as frequently as Sharis though. But we will when we want to dress up occasionally."

"Is that so....."

He felt a bit embarrassed that he had never noticed until now.

Perhaps the other girls who somehow smell good were also actually fussing about it in the back.

(It's really hard for girl huh.)

Lux was in admiration, at the same time he became curious with the perfume of the girls and approached near them. There Tillfur took distance from him in panic.

"—Wait, don't sniff our scent nonchalantly like that!? Lo, look, we are taking care of it so it will be all right! But there is still the slightest chance of something going wrong isn't it!?"

"So, sorry-.....!"

What kind of slightest chance could it be?

Lux thought questioningly inside his heart, but surely it was rude to approach and sniff a girl.

"Master too still have things to learn."

When Lux apologized in fluster, Noct muttered that while presenting to him two small jars.

Tillfur used orange perfume and pomade.

And it seemed Noct was using lavender aroma, she allowed him to sniff each of the jar's scent.

The perfumes perfectly suited the image of the lively and cheerful Tillfur, and the calm and composed Noct.

"—Now then, I want to present a perfume to Lux-kun too. Try sniffing various aroma and test which one you like. If you use it well, your stock as man will increase further you know?"

"I understand. I'll give it a try."

Lux's expression broke into a relieved smile at Sharis's consideration.

He had done various things through his chores, but he hadn't experienced something like this, so it felt fresh.

"Actually I also want you to try cosmetic too. If it is matched with the cross-dressing you did before, I think it will surely become useful for disguise but—"

"—I absolutely don't want to do that!"

Lux who got his previous trauma revived instantly refused with all his might.

In the end he chose a lemongrass perfume and then they headed to the next shop.

—



## Part 6

"Yahoo! I have contacted beforehand but, do you got free time?"

Next they visited a shop of ornament that Tillfur's relative was managing.

The inside of the shop gave an antique feeling, various accessories were lining up everywhere.

"My? You are bringing your friends again."

A female shopkeeper with elegant atmosphere welcomed Lux and co with a smile.

It seemed that Tillfur's family had an artisan background, they had their main store in the capital which seemed to be really famous.

"At Lilmit main store, they are making goods that are dedicated for the kingdom, like noble's family crest, the arm band of the new kingdom's military, collar badge, and so on. A part of those items manufacturing has been requested to us since the era of the old empire."

"Yes. The three of us getting acquainted with each other mainly began from that connection too."

Sharis was born in a famous family of knight, while Noct was from the family of servants that served Sharis's house.

And then, Tillfur was the daughter of craftsman who came and went to receive work order from the military.

They were each brought by their parents to work since they were childhood and encountered each other, and because their residences were close to each other at the time, they became close.

They were childhood friends from ten years ago, and even now they were really close to each other.

Even though their ages were different from each other—, and then even though strictly speaking the relationship between Sharis and Noct was that of a master and servant, they called each other without honorific. It seemed that they interacted with each other while forgetting their background when it was only the three of them was from their childhood promise that was still alive until now.

"Is, that so."

Lux was feeling surprised by the unexpected truth and he looked around inside the shop once more.

The daughter of a famous craftsman who had a shop of long standing in the royal capital.

When he imagined that, his impression of Tillfur changed slightly.

"Then, Tillfur's hobby is to by accessory?"

Tillfur made a mischievous smile at Lux's frank question, as though she had been waiting for it. Then she waved her finger while going 'tsk, tsk'.

"How naïve, Lux-chi. Something like that is for only beginner. Today we came here to design our own accessory."

She lined up chairs in front of the counter, then she prepared a desk, papers, ink, and feather pens.

It seemed she had made appointment so the shop would make the accessory based on their own designed shape or picture.

"As an apprentice, sometimes I was also told to do design work. How's that? Surprised?"

".....Yes. You're amazing, Tillfur."

When Lux praised her honestly, Sharis and Noct muttered with a small voice.

"Though most of what she created will be adjusted again by the shopkeeper here."

"Yes. Also, the accessory from her design doesn't really sold well."

"Wai-!? Even though I'm doing my best in making appeal-!?"

Lux smiled wryly at Tillfur's boast that easily crumbled while he also tried to draw his own design.

The rabbit picture that he casually drew ended up poorly. Tillfur laughed at it.



"—Then, next I will introduce my hobby to master."

For the last, Lux accompanied Noct in her hobby at the bookstore that was near the center of the second block.

Because book was expensive and precious, there was also shop with membership system that not only sold book but also lending them out.

The store was smaller than the library in the Academy, but countless bookshelves were lined up and the space was filled with peculiar scent.

Reading originally should be really matching with Noct's image but—.

"But, I wonder why. I don't really remember Noct reading book in the Academy though?"

"Yes. I almost never read in front of other people after all."

She easily answered like that.

"Normally I will prioritize my work as servant. After all nonchalantly obtaining various knowledge for the sake of the master I'm serving is my duty."

"....."

Certainly, Noct might be a daughter of family of servant.

But, at the very least right now she was still military cadet. Her work ethic in spite of that was surprising.

Perhaps, her usual silent appearance was also from there—.

"By the way, my personality is like this simply by birth."

"....."

'Is my face that easy to understand.....?'

After reading Lux's heart with her usual fixed stare, Noct silently walked forward.

"Master too, if there is book that you are interested at, please tell me by all means."

"Ri, right....."

(She is still going to continue calling me that.....?)

Even while feeling slightly overwhelmed, Lux stared at the spine of the books lining up inside the shelves. He took some of them into his hand and gave them a look.

At the past, he was reading tactic manual, philosophy book, and Drag-Ride book in the imperial court's archive, but—.

Almost everything was for the sake of obtaining necessary knowledge for the revolution. He had almost never reading book simply because of pure curiosity.

"By the way, what kind of book Noct is reading right now?"

"Yes. Recently I'm reading mainly books about decorative plant and kitchen garden. Because I'm also raising up flower in the Academy."

When Lux tried asking to obtain a clue for what book to choose, such reply immediately came back to him.

He thought that it didn't sound so bad, but as expected he didn't get any other idea.

"Oi, the boy there. What kind of thing you are interested at?"

"No, that's—"

While he was walking around in front of the bookshelves, the middle-aged man behind the counter called out to him.

The shopkeeper gave a stern impression with his large built that was unusual for a bookstore. He leaned his body forward and beckoned at Lux.

"Even so, boy, you cannot be made light of eh."

"Yes.....?"

The shopkeeper brought his face close to the ear of the bewildered Lux and grinned widely.

"That missy wearing maid uniform. She often came since some time ago, but this is the first time she brought a man with her. You are quite something huh?"

".....No, Noct is only my junior in school. We aren't like that."

"Gah-ha-ha. Don't be so shy! Even I got several women serving me when I was young!"

\*Bam bam\* The shopkeeper slapped Lux's back painfully.

"....."

Lux was nonplussed by this shopkeeper's mood, but the Triad were looking for book at slight distance away, so they weren't paying attention to here.

"Yosh! What kind of book that you want? You can tell uncle anything!"

"Err, is there any book that is popular for a boy my age?"

When the troubled Lux told the shopkeeper his original objective, the shopkeeper grinned after thinking for a while and took out a book from behind the counter.

"Yosh! It has to be this. Surely this is gonna be useful when you got closer with those girls. Also , it can be used somehow when you are alone by yourself. This book is enlightening."

Was this a book about how to get closer to someone, or perhaps about friendship?

"The, then please lend me that."

"—Here you go, don't let your teachers find it no matter what!"

The shopkeeper spoke incomprehensible thing while giving the book to Lux.

"Eh? The price—"

"Aah.....I already got the money from that girl just now. This book's cost is within that range. Don't worry."

"Eh.....?"

Lux turned his gaze at Noct who was some distance away.

When the girl in maid appearance noticed him, she gave him a small nod.

"—Thank you very much."

Lux said his gratitude to the shopkeeper and joined up with the Triad.

They then entered a nearby café for a short break and this time Lux said his thanks to Noct once more.

"Thank you Noct. For giving me this present of book."

"I only did the natural thing for a servant. More importantly Lux-san, what kind of book that you bought?"

"Yep yep. I'm also interested."

Noct showed a faint smile. The Tillfur also spiritedly joined the talk.

"Here. Take a look."



Lux presented the book the shopkeeper chose for him and Noct opened the page.

But, right after that, for some reason the junior girl's expression stiffened.

"....."

Ten-odd seconds later, Noct's cheeks were vaguely reddening and he turned a reproachful gaze at him along with a mysterious silence.

"Excuse me, Lux-san."

"What? I was told that it's a book that will be really useful for me——"

"This novel, it has a story about the love affair of a master and a maid written in it though?"

"Buhah!?"

Lux reflexively spurted out the tea he was drinking.

"Eh, let me see——wait, this book, there ain't nothing in it except erotic scene!?"

Tillfur who snatched the book from the side yelled with blushing cheeks.

"Wai-!? Wait a second!? This is some kind of mistake. I'm not——"

Lux who was about to make excuse went 'hah' in realization.

'Surely this is gonna be useful when you got closer with those girls.'

He recalled the shopkeeper's words and cold sweat trickled through his back.

"Don't tell me——this is what he meant!?"

At that moment, Noct who was sitting in front of him while staring at him reproachfully was glaring at Lux with an upward gaze.

"So I was made to buy this kind of lewd book as my hospitality for Lux-san. Does Lux-san overlap the image of the maid in this story with me?"

"It's a misunderstanding so stop with that way of talking okay!? Or rather, don't tell this to Airi no matter what!"

"But, it can't be helped if this is master's wish. I'm returning this book. Please, enjoy it to your heart's content."

"No, it's fine you know!? I don't need it! This is only a mistake anyway!"

"Lux-san really doesn't need this book? The content written inside seem to be really amazing though?"

"....."

"I will tell Airi later that Lux-san is hesitating."

"I'm telling you that's not it-!? I really don't need it!"

Lux shook his head in panic. Near him, Sharis and Tillfur were staring at him with a grin.

"Fufufu. Somehow it feels strange to know the fetish of a boy I'm acquainted with."

"Lux-chi also has that kind of side eehh."

"Tha, that's why this is just a mistake——"

"Then I will keep hold to this book. I will look for a chance and send it back to that perverted shopkeeper. In exchange I will choose the suitable book for Lux-san."

"Ah, ye, yes....."



It wasn't an atmosphere where he could say that he felt just slightly disappointed of that.

After the four had tea for a bit, they left the café.

They would shop in the market before returning to Sharis's villa.

"Do you have a request for the dinner master? If it's something that needs no prior preparation then I can mostly make it but——"

"......Err, food that everyone likes is fine."

When Lux answered like that to Noct's question, the Triad made a long sigh.

"You are just like always. It helps that you are considerate, but it's fine to be a bit more selfish you know? After all we too have know each other quite well."

"But——"

When Lux was going to respond to Sharis's words, at that time,

—

"......Oi! You over there-!"

—

At the main street that was heading toward the market in the second district, a man came yelling angrily.

He was wearing an old and dirty coat with unshaven grim face.

Strong scent of alcohol could be smelt mixing with sour body odor.

"......Me?"

Lux was slightly perplexed while pointing at himself. Then the man got even closer with unsteady gait.

"Ain't that obvious you criminal! Because you lost against the like of the new kingdom, I got fired from my job! The value of man got decreased in this damn country! .....Hics!"

The man's face was bright red until his neck. His gait was unsteady.

"Did something happen?"

Even so, Lux replied calmly.

He had often met this kind of drunk since he was doing chores, so he was used with handling them.

He wanted to conclude this peacefully in the way that didn't bother the Triad.

"I was only doing exactly the same thing like before! Even though I finally climbed up until the position of the aide of miner union leader, just because of that minor thiiiing—. If it's at the empire in the past, this kinda thing ain't gonna happen to me.....dammit-!"

"....."

If the unclear rambling of the drunkard was summarized, it seemed that the man's drinking habit was bad and he constantly acted and spoke violently at the women in his workplace. He was criticized about that by the work inspector and just the other day he was dismissed from his position.

The current new kingdom was changing from the strong trend of male chauvinism.

The drunkard thought that was the cause of his failure. Then at that timing he accidentally caught sight of Lux who was a former imperial family. His rage exploded from that.

'Fuu.' Lux took a deep breath, then he spoke with a calm voice.

"I understand that you hate me, but nothing good will come from it even if you do that you know?"

However, it appeared the man took offense needlessly at Lux's calm attitude. He raised up his empty bottle and attacked suddenly instead.

"Shuut up you criminal! Because of you bastard I——"

"-.....!?"

That attack which was like a surprise attack made Lux held his breath.

But, the moment he reacted in order to protect Sharis and others, the three girls burst into action and leaped in front of Lux.

"Buhah!?"

Tillfur threw the wheat flour bundle they bought for dinner to the man's face, then when the man faltered, Noct swept the man's leg with her boot.

At the end Sharis sharply thrust her sheathed Sword Device in front of the face of the man who fell on her butt.

"Yo, you bitches, what aare——"

The flowing combination movement caused the repelled man to get bewildered, unable to understand what had happened.

"Stay quiet if you don't want to get injured. We are going to call the guard now so be patient. Also, laying your hand on him right now isn't a good move you know? After all this me, the daughter of the military's vice commander is accompanying him."

"Guh, u.....!"

The more a person wielded their authority, the weaker they were against someone with stronger authority.

The man groaned in frustration and didn't resist further.

"....."

It was surprising.

Even though Lux thought that he was better than the girls in hand-to-hand combat and tried to protect them, it was instead him who got protected.

"Perhaps we have overstepped ourselves impertinently?"

After the drunkard was taken away by the arriving guards, Sharis suddenly said that to him.

"No, I was saved—, but....."

"It's all right. After all we are also really used to this kinda thing. We have caught many peeping tom, molester, or kidnapper that came to the Academy after all."

"Yes. But, master also seems familiar with this. You didn't look shaken at all."

".....I guess."

Lux smiled awkwardly in respond to Noct's words.

"Recently I haven't really met anyone like that—but five years ago, when I had only just started doing chores here and there, something like this happened frequently."

"....."

"There was also people who investigated my location and aimed at me, so I kept moving to various places, and I also couldn't make friend the same age with me at all—wait, sorry. Somehow it became a gloomy story."

When Lux hurriedly smiled wryly, Sharis lightly clapped Lux's shoulder.

And then, they started walking through the path toward the market again.

"Sorry for today, we are making merry foolishly like usual. We thought to entertain you a bit more seriously but, the three of us are this kind of people after all."

"That's not true. When I'm looking at you three, I'm also having fun."

Sharis went ‘fuh’ seeing Lux’s smiling face and she smiled.

"I see. That’s great. By the way, you still haven’t use your command right to us though? Won’t you make your decision soon?"

"Ah....."

Lux noticed that he had completely forgotten about what he had been told before they went out until now.

The three were sending him fixed gaze that was filled with expectation. After worrying and thinking for a while—Lux said.

"Err, then—, from here on.....will you three keep getting along with me as my friends?"

Lux said that even while thinking that it was a bit embarrassing.

That was Lux’s genuine feeling.

Lux intended to wish for the relationship that he who was a former imperial family and a criminal was looking for, but—.

"No good."

"Eeeeh.....!?"

Sharis who suddenly put up a smile answered Lux immediately.

"Me too, I think that kind of wish is just out of question."

"Yes. I agree with that point."

(To, to think that I’ll receive rejection when the mood is like this-.....!)

Lux was dumbfounded inside his heart. He reflexively hung down his head, but then,

"Fufu, you are cute like always. Don’t look that shocked."



Sharis wrapped her hand on Lux's shoulder with a mischievous tone.

The sensation of soft breast touched his shoulder. At the same time, the faint scent of rose perfume caused his heart to skip a beat.

Sharis lightly poked at the cheek of the bewildered Lux and she smiled.

"We and you are already a very close friends right? And then, it's already decided that we are going to get along well with you from here on too. That's why—there is already no need to accept that kind of command right from the start."



Tillfur and Noct also showed their smile in respond to Sharis's words.

Just from seeing that, it was conveyed to Lux that these three had the same feeling.

"—Thank you, very much."

Lux smiled in relieves and told them so.

For a long time, he didn't wish for that for the sake of his objective.

Even so—somewhere in his heart he was wishing for that relationship all this time.

He was really happy that they were saying that to him.

"Then, how about we try to form a team of not just us three, but with the four of us? However, it will be weird if one of us is the only one with different appearance—I won't mind if you cross dress only when in the time of activity you know?"

"Please stop already with that kind of talk-!"

Lux whose old wound was gouged out yelled in fluster.

As expected, having a lot of friends that were only girls might bring a different kind of hardship with it too. Lux smiled wryly.

## **Chapter 8: Coral Chapter – Reunion And Promise**

## Part 1

Lux felt a prickling pain inside his head, his field of vision was covered by sandstorm.

"—What's this? My body, is heavy....."

He felt uneasy that he might catch a cold, but when he pressed his hand on his head, the pain immediately receded.

Last night he became awake at midnight due to a strange earthquake.

Perhaps it affected him a bit.

"Now then-.....there, I wonder if the preparation is fine like this?"

The fortress city Cross Field, in the morning of a holiday.

Lux was wiping the sweat on his head inside his room at the girl dormitory where currently he was spending his time alone.

Luggage was crowding inside the room for two people.

He was packing food, valuables, change of clothes, and so on for the portion of several days, but it was already a lot just from that.

More than half of his luggage was merchandises that Relie prepared for him to be used for his camouflage.

The contents were mainly precious metals and expensive Drag-Ride related items.

The background setting was that he would be bringing them to Heiburg Republic's capital for business discussion.

Of course, his true objective was different.

He would go there for infiltration where he would investigate a certain incident that was being done by the initiative of Heiburg Republic's higher-

ups.

"However, I wonder if I will be able to do this alone? Something like this——"

Lux sat down on his bed and muttered earnestly.

He slowly took a deep breath and closed his eyes and recalled the happening about a week ago.

—

## Part 2

The underground labyrinth inside Academy's ground.

In that space that was like an atelier with countless utensil lined up and bookshelves that were filled with books recording important secrets, Lux was given an unexpected mission by the captain of Seven Dragon Paladins, Magialca.

—

'Therefore, the Seven Dragon Paladin of New Kingdom Atismata, Lux Arcadia. I will bequeath you with a special mission from the captain. Find the traitor that exist among our world alliance—and erase them! I already have a prospect where they might appear.'

—

The ancient race of Ruin, the Lords showed their appearance around two weeks ago. The imperial princess of the Lords, Listelka suggested a skill exhibition battle. As the result, the Ruin inside new kingdom's territory, Babel fell into Heiburg's hand.

In order to carry out Ruin investigation for the span a month, an expeditionary force from Heiburg was starting the procedure to be stationed in a port city inside new kingdom's territory.

It was the port city inside the territory that was governed by Celis's father Dist, one of the four great nobles. The name of the port city was—Triport.

That city that was the nearest to Babel would likely get dragged into the whirlpool of disturbance.

The treasures that would be obtained by conquering Ruin would be stolen, and through the process of that, Abyss would appeared and brought harm to the surrounding, which would be burdened to the new kingdom.

Furthermore if by chance the greatest class of Abyss, the Ragnarok slipped away from the Babel, there was even the possibility that several cities and villages would be erased from the map.

Because of that, mixed force of Drag-Knights would be dispatched from the new kingdom to the Triport, even several Academy's students who were Divine Drag-Ride users would be recruited toward that city by turns.

There was a possibility that Lux would also get chosen for that, but thinking that he should refrain from using Bahamut inside the new kingdom's territory, he was told by Relie to concentrate toward a different mission.

'It's unfortunate that I cannot serve as Lux's aide, but I will accomplish my own duty. Please be careful while you are away.'

Celis said that to him and then departed to Triport early.

And then on the other hand, Lux was preparing for his departure toward the capital of Heiburg Republic, Exestal, in order to accomplish the mission Magialca gave him.

Why was Magialca convinced that the 'traitor' of the world alliance would show up there?

From Lux's viewpoint, he was half in doubt about Magialca's reasoning, but for the time being he would disguise himself as merchant and infiltrated there.

Thus, he gathered the merchandises Relie arranged for him and put his outfit in order.

It was the eleventh month—the autumn was coming to an end. During these remaining ten days, Lux had finished going to class while spending time with the girls.

He had felt it once more, how pleasant his everyday with the girls.

Exactly because of that—Lux was able to renew his determination that he wouldn't let this world come to an end in half more years.



In a few more days Lux would depart from this Cross Field.

Before that he went out from the girl dormitory while pondering if there was something that he hadn't done.

"I have also done as much chores as possible in the Academy that I wasn't able to do until now. I think it will be fine for now but——"

Lux strolled at the courtyard while muttering.

For today he accepted almost no chores in order to prepare. His schedule was empty since the afternoon.

"Should I invite Airi and walk around in the city?"

While he was thinking of such thing, he suddenly ran into female students of the Academy.

"Ah, Lux-san. How do you do?"

"Oh, are you doing chores again today? Even though it's a holiday, you must have it hard."

Two girls at the same grade with him called out to him amiably.

When Lux asked them if there was anything unusual, the two of them pondered for a while.

"Eerrr, let's see. Come to think of it....., there was a girl who was sneakily loitering around the Academy since some time ago. You can call that strange perhaps."

"Eh, that's——"

The humanoid Ragnarok, Sacred Eclipse that had only just gotten defeated should have revived yet.

Thus it shouldn't be a big problem, but he got a bit curious about it.

"Thank you. Then, I'll go take a look for a bit."

Lux parted from the two students and went out of the Academy gate and looked around the area.

He was vigilant against the possibility of fellow like Gerdaf who attacked Lux and others in the campus festival, but it seemed it was only his needless anxiety.

Yoruka would periodically stand on guard at the Academy, but he also didn't want to burden it all on just her, so this was a good chance.

"Right now there doesn't seem to be anything strange."

"Nyaaah"

When Lux was feeling relieved at the peace before him, a cat suddenly crossed in front of Lux.

The cat looked somewhat familiar. Its mouth was holding a small bag.

'Eh?', Lux thought while feeling slightly taken aback. Then at that moment, sound of footsteps came from behind.

"Wai-!? WAIITTT-!? SOMEONE, PLEASE CATCH THAT CAAATT-!"

"Eh.....?"

Lux turned his face toward the voice in surprise.

Over there, a girl wearing clean and neat lacy dress was desperately chasing the cat.

"Don't tell me this—, again!?"

Correct.

It was that cat, the cat who became the impetus of Lux getting enrolled into the Academy.

It seemed that thieving cat had learned the habit of stealing people's thing.

But, only this time there was no way he would let it escape easily.

"Yosh! I'll absolutely catch it this time!"

Lux instantly determined himself.

This opponent beat him at the first game of tag, but he was different from that time.

If it was the current him—he could overtake it.

"Funyaaaah!"

It was uncertain if the cat considered Lux as its longtime enemy, but the thieving cat too meowed shrilly with fighting spirit, then it accelerated.

But, even so Lux wasn't left behind.

The agile and skilled escape of the wild animal was cornered by Lux's experience.

(As I thought. It's the same cat with before—, its escape habit is the same.)

Lux's observation and foresight had been polished through Drag-Ride's mock battle.

It could also be applied to cat's movement. Lux erased its escape options one by one.

It might not be possible if it was that time when he came for the first time to the Academy, but the current Lux was thoroughly familiar with the structure of the Academy's ground.

Where was the place that a cat could easily escape to?

Or else, where was the place where it would be easy to corner the cat later?

Lux himself was also running in full speed while tightening those options, guided the cat, and cornered it.

"Yosh! After getting this far—, wha-.....!?"

When Lux thought that he had cornered the cat until the corner of the fence, the cat kicked on the wall and jumped high.

Lux was taken by surprise.

It wasn't just Lux, even the cat had improved in skill.

A beat later Lux also jumped and reached out his hand, but he couldn't catch it.

"Wait! I <sup>Boku</sup>too.....! No, I <sup>watashi</sup>too am also here!"

The voice of the girl who was also chasing after the cat while wearing skirt immediately came from behind.

Lux who detected her presence used his finger to pull the string of the bag fluttering in the air and he succeeded somehow in breaking the cat's balance.

"Funyaaa!?"

The cat lost his balance midair and fell, but Lux too also failed in taking the bag.

Lux fell on the ground on his back with his face facing up. In the end he was unable to catch the cat, but—.

"Ei-!"

The girl wearing frilly one piece who came chasing the cat splendidly caught the bag.

Lux who used all his might to stop the cat's movement, and the girl who aimed at the bag.

The teamwork of the two meshed perfectly with each other and made the strategy a success magnificently.

"I did it! I got it back, thank you Lux-kun!"

The girl raised her hand with a wide smile.

Lux kept lying down on the ground while he was going to reply back with a smile, but then he suddenly held his breath in surprise and turned stiff.

"......Eh, just now? My name——.....wait, uwah!?"

When Lux was going to lift up his body in surprise, he noticed that situation.

The smiling girl who took back the back.

Lux had tumbled down between the legs of the girl who was standing above him.

For the girl who was wearing pure white dress to be right above him meant that his gaze was inevitably absorbed to inside her skirt——, sky blue color that was like clear weather of the autumn was projected there.

"Wait, KYAAAaAAAH!?"

The girl instantly turned red until her neck and she screamed with all her might.

"Wai-, wait a second-!? If you yell that loudly——"

Lux immediately got up on his feet, took the girl's hand, and pulled her into the nearby cover.

"Wha, what are you doing!? Co, could it be——, you are planning to do pe, pe-pe-p<sup>boku</sup>erverted thing to me!?"

"Not that!? This place is still a military facility after a fashion, so you will get scolded if you are found out!"

"Ah....."

The girl finally noticed. She allowed herself to be dragged by Lux and obediently hid at the shadow of a bush.

After that, Triad members arrived to that place that was slightly distanced from the courtyard.

".....Hmm, I thought that I heard a girl's scream from here, but it appears that it was just my imagination."

"Sharis is highly strung eeh. Though the campus festival has also just ended, so I get it if you feel anxious."

"Yes. Perhaps it was only Lux-san accidentally encountering someone changing clothes again."

Sharis, Tillfur, and Noct were muttering such thing alternately.

They then looked around for a bit at the surrounding, then they left.



"Fuu, we're saved....."

If it was Lux, he believed that he would be forgiven even if he was found out, but he didn't want the girls of Triad who volunteered to act as vigilance committee to bend the rule for him too much.

The moment he patted his chest in relieve, he suddenly noticed the presence behind him.

When he turned around, the girl whose expression was stiff from enduring the embarrassment still had her hand grasped by Lux.

"No, this isn't how it looks like!? I was looking at your underwear before this was a misunderstanding—not that, it was just an accident! I didn't have any intention at all to peek....., wait, eh?"

While making excuse, a strange sensation rose inside Lux's body that was holding hand with the girl.

A faint prickling pain was born behind his eyes. He saw sandstorm before his eyes.

The sound of blood circulation echoed in his eardrums.

After that happening that took place in less than a few seconds, the form of the girl before him overlapped with a certain image.

"You, could you be, .....Coral?"

"Eh.....?"

The girl was flustered hearing the word that slipped out from Lux's mouth.

Lux himself thought that no way such thing could be true.

The young man who was the aide of Greifer, the Seven Dragon Paladins of Vanheim Principality. A young man with gentle personality who was quite friendly with Lux.



After the summit two weeks ago was over, Coral should have returned back to Vanheim Principality together with Greifer and others.

Furthermore, the person in front of Lux right now was wearing clothes and hairstyle of girl.

Vibrant long light green hair that was spreading out and pure white dress.

That appearance made Lux felt a strong déjà vu for some reason.

Although Coral originally had androgynous appearance, he should have never seen this girl's appearance for even once.

"Ku.....!?"

Right after that, a sharp pain ran inside Lux's head and he fell on his knee.

His hand pressed on his forehead and he stayed still. After that the pain immediately receded.

"A, are you all right Lux-kun.....? If you are feeling unwell, then we should go to the medical office——"

The girl called out to Lux uneasily, but Lux stood up and shook his head.

"No. I'm all right already so don't worry. More importantly, as I thought you are Coral right?"

"Eh.....!? N, no I<sup>boku</sup>.....not that, I<sup>watashi</sup> am not that person.....you know?"

The girl averted her eyes without any confidence for some reason.

(It's too suspicious..... But——)

In reality, there was also no definite truth that this girl was Coral.

She had the same hair and eye color with Coral, so he believed the possibility was high, but——.

"Just now you mentioned medical office didn't you? How did you know that this place has something like that?"

"Kuh....., n, no. A military facility this size must have that much at least. Re, remember, just now you said that this place is a military facility."

The girl made an awkward friendly smile, but as expected she was subtly suspicious.

"The, then, seeing that I am an outsider here, I'll quickly leave. Thank you for helping me taking back this bag."

The girl said that and slowly tried to back away from Lux.

Lux who saw that raised his voice in hurry.

"Wait! The gate before this has a patrolling soldier. It's better to get out from the backdoor. The number of student strolling around is also increasing at this time, perhaps it's better to hurry——"

"I, is that so? Understood, I will be careful. Farewell!"

The girl smiled and waved her hand, then she half ran toward the backdoor.

She was moving in a straight line through the shortest route toward the backdoor that was still far away from this spot that was at the verge of the courtyard.

"....."

But, after a few seconds, the girl stopped still. She turned around with a wry smile.

"E, errr.....right, yes. Whe, where is the backdoor again!? I forgot to ask that-!"

"Aa....."

She finally got captured at the second trap Lux laid out.

In the first place, only the student of the Academy knew about the backdoor.

And yet she—no, he instantly guessed the location instantly.

In other words, he knew about the backdoor's location.

Most likely, it was Airi who told him that while he was staying in the Cross Field.

It seemed that he noticed that late, but the proof was already left behind.

"Say.....as I thought, you noticed already, about me?"  
boku

Coral grasped the cuff of his dress while averting his gaze shyly.

From his hairstyle and outfit, he wasn't an androgynous young man anymore, he only looked like a cute girl that was Lux's age.

"Well, it wasn't like I was 100% sure. By the way, why are you still in this Cross Field? Also, that appearance too——"

"A, ahahahaha..... This is, there is a bit of circumstance—more  
boku  
importantly Lux-kun. What do you think about my appearance right now?"

"Even if you ask me that—, you look like a normal cute girl though."

"Eh?"

Coral's eyes turned round like saucer hearing Lux's words. Right after that his cheeks puffed red.

Seeing that reaction bewildered even Lux who said that.

"N, no, I don't mean like that. I mean that it really suits you, o, or that your disguise looks really natural."

Lux was worried because he called Coral 'cute' even though he was pretty much a male, but it seemed Coral didn't really mind it.

"Fo, for the time being I'm currently a boy you know!? —Not that! Things like my hair color or eye color, they properly look like the usual me right?"

"Ye, yes. But, your chest——"

There was only one place that was baffling for Lux.

The two bulges that could be clearly seen from above the dress were things that couldn't be seen from Coral previously.

"Eh, this!? Thi, this is, that—the, they are padding. It's for disguise, just in case."

Coral smiled wryly in panic and explained it like that.

Lux was a bit curious about his chest, but he also hesitated to stare fixedly at there, so he didn't ask further than that.

"And, why are you looking like that? What's more you are loitering around the Academy——"

"E, eerr, you see, it will be long if I talk about it but, that's....."

Seeing Coral hesitating looking slightly bewildered, Lux let out a sigh.

Surely it was a matter that was hard to be said openly in this place.

Lux who guessed that made a suggestion.

"Then, how about we talk outside the Academy? I think I can show you around if it's inside the Cross Field."

"Ri, right. Please, by all means....."

And then, Lux headed outside the Academy together with Coral who was still blushing.

—

## Part 3

"And, just what happened? Can you tell now that we are here?"

Lux brought Coral who was wearing a neat and clean dress to walk leisurely on the main street.

They were at the center of the first block that was shaped like a cross.

Perhaps because today was a holiday, the central plaza was bustling. They sat on a bench and finally Coral told his story.

"Err, you see. It's hard to say it with a loud voice but, this is a mission from Vanheim Principality. Because of that I disguised myself like this. It's embarrassing though."

"Is, that so. But—just what kind of mission it is?"

Lux looked at Coral's figure when she was going to talk.

His hair wasn't braided like usual. His long hair was smoothly spreading out.

His glossy lips were slightly opened, letting out a soprano voice.

"Vine Hachettes. One of the three bosses of Dragon Marauder, the Earth Dragon division commander who is leading the Wyrms force. He is still 16 years old, but his strength is among the best."

"Dragon Marauder!? Don't tell me, they are still near the Academy even now——"

The mercenary force that was hostile to the royalty and aristocrats of many countries and raised havoc in Ruins.

Furthermore they were the archenemy of the world alliance that currently was aiming for Avalon.

And according to the story that he heard later on, they also seemed to attack the Academy the other day too—.

"No. Right now they aren't showing big movement. No, there is only suspicion that his figure was seen here. It seemed that one of the royal knights who were brought here from Vanheim Principality witnessed his appearance. That's why—"

"Because of that Coral dressed as a girl and remained alone in this city?"

Coral nodded while staying alert to the surrounding.

This town market was bustling right now.

Coral moved his gaze around to search for the enemy's figure among the citizens.

"But, why is it Coral who remained here? Even if for example a division commander of the Dragon Marauder is really hiding in this city—"

There was no need for Coral to do this mission solo.

Even if danger would visit, it would happen inside the territory of the new kingdom, not in Vanheim.

He could just warn the military and had them taken over this case.

"No. Don't tell anyone else this but....., that division commander had a debt. He is, a distant relative of Vanhaim Principality's royalt—what's more he is from the same line as me."

".....-!?"

The face of Lux who heard that turned slightly tense.

The young man Vine who was a former royalty wasn't known by the public, but it was still a fact that he was a relative of Princess Milmiette who Coral served.

Thus, the country had the motive to deal with this secretly if possible.

"That's the circumstance, so don't mind me Lux-kun. I can at least protect myself. Well, I also think that originally this matter should be told to the new kingdom's side, but——"

Coral smiled wryly. In respond Lux pondered for a bit.

If this was a secret mission from Vanheim Principality, then there was no way he could tell about this matter to the Academy and the new kingdom.

In other words——.

"Then, let me to help out a bit."

".....Eh?"

Coral opened his mouth wide at Lux's suggestion.

"It must be difficult to be alone in an unfamiliar city right? Besides if it become a battle against Dragon Marauder, Coral will also be in danger."

"Bu, but——"

Perhaps because it was a special mission, Coral's expression was a bit bewildered.

"You are searching around the Academy because the enemy might be around here isn't it? I don't want to let everyone in this city to meet danger."

"Ye, yes. You're right but.....I"

Coral's response was evasive.

Perhaps Lux's suggestion was unexpected for Coral. He was bewildered by Lux's words but——,

"It's all right. I won't stay with you all the time. Let's decide a time to walk around the city. It will be standing out if a girl who isn't even a military cadet is loitering around this area you know?"

"I, is that so!? I was standing out that much?"

Coral spoke with a surprised expression, but actually the reality was a bit different from that.

A beautiful girl at that age that gave a noble impression loitering around the Academy by herself was problematic.

Although, it was a bit hard to tell Coral who was an androgynous young man just how feminine he looked.

(I also have experience going through something like this huh.....)

Thanks to the experience of the Triad making him cross dressed as girl, Lux could sympathize with Coral.

"—I got it. Then Lux-kun, can I ask you to teach me a bit about this city?"

It appeared that Lux's good will was conveyed. Coral determined himself and agreed.

And then, the mission with Coral started from this day.

—



## Part 4

"The witness report from Milmiette-sama's royal guard said that it was around here....."

The extensive outer wall that surrounded Academy's ground.

Lux was cautioned by Coral while they were making a round around the surrounding.

"It's fine to not get too close to the Academy. That's, if we are seen by the students, we won't know what they will say about us."

"About Coral? It will be fine, as expected if it's a party of two like us then it won't look unnatural. Even if the students saw us, I will cover it up properly."

".....It's not about me, it's about Lux-kun. Won't it get bad if you are walking alone with me when I'm dressed as girl like this?"

".....Eh? Why?"

"....."

When Lux responded like that seriously, Coral unusually stared fixedly at him, then he sighed deeply.

"Now I understand a little bit about Airi-chan's hardships. Lux-kun sometimes is really full of opening."

Coral's sarcasm that was quite transparent caused Lux to make a conflicted expression.

He wanted to object slightly, but he also happened to be relatively aware of what Coral meant, so he couldn't say it.

"We don't know what is the objective of Dragon Marauder's division commander Vine. If it's before the campus festival, then the possibility is

high that he came for preliminary inspection in the preparation to rescue Drakkhen, But now——"

"Is he planning something like kidnapping the Academy's student or staff?"

"No way.....is something that I can really say. But, no matter how excellent of a Drag-Knight he is and that he is a division commander, attacking the Academy with you all in it isn't a good plan."

Including Lux, the Academy usually had elites gathered within.

Lisha, Krulcifer, Philuffy, Celis, and then Yoruka.

It was unthinkable that someone would attack alone knowing that there were six Divine Drag-Ride users as opposition.

"Besides, these few days I couldn't confirm Vine's appearance."

"Is your presence here exposed?"

"I wonder? But, I want to stay here for just a bit more to investigate."

"I see....."

Their talk paused for the moment and a bit of quiet descended.

Coral observed Lux's state while smiling apologetically.

"That's why, Lux-kun too doesn't need to try too hard. This mission is like half from my own judgment."

Certainly, it might be just as he said.

Because he was feeling discretion toward Lux.....or rather, because this was related to the secret of Vanheim Principality, Lux accompanying Coral might also not be a good thing.

So far as it went, just teaching Coral about the path where he could observe the Academy's surrounding without standing out should be enough.

"Got it. Then, if there is something, come talk to me anytime."

"Yes. Then—, .....-!?"

Coral was about to respond to Lux's words. It was at that moment, \*growl\*, a small sound could be heard from nearby.

"-.....!?"

It didn't come from Lux.

The growling sound of stomach could be heard from in front of him. Coral's cheeks turned red once more.

"Thi, this isn't what you think Lux-kun!? That's, it's not like I skipped eating in order to save the living expenses. I was only completely absorbed in work that I forgot to eat——"

It seemed because this was an unexpected mission, Coral didn't prepare that much money for the travelling expenses.

It was an unusual miss for Coral who was a reliable person. Lux's mouth broke into a smile unconsciously.

"Is that so? Then Coral is quite a gluttony isn't it?"

"Lux-kun you, bully....."

When Coral acted shyly while directing a reproachful gaze at him, his cute girl appearance caused Lux's heart to skip a beat.

"Ahaha.....sorry. Good timing, I'm also feeling hungry right now, let's go eat something."

Lux said that and invited Coral.

"Uu....., I wish to be treated in exchange of what you said just now."

It seemed that Coral was hungry as expected, he came with Lux even while looking embarrassed.

A bar in the alley was also doubling as a restaurant in the afternoon.

There they feasted on chicken and mushroom simmered in cream, freshly baked bread, and smoked salmon.

Lux ordered for the food to be shared half with Coral, but the restaurant owner who was still young kindly gave them extra pickles and bacon eggs.

The extra was given also because Lux had worked odd jobs there in the past.

"Hahaha, when I heard that you are going to enroll in the academy of those young ladies, I wondered just what will happen to you. But to think that you are going to bring a girl this cute here. Lux too has grown up huh."

"No, he.....she is just a friend——"

The stylishly bearded owner served the dishes while making reminiscent talk about the period when Lux was doing chores.

A few years ago, when this restaurant had just been opened, the owner was helped when Lux worked here for two weeks.

They exchanged talk and finished their meal before exiting the restaurant.

When Lux took Coral's bag that was put on the chair and handed it to him, he noticed something.

"Tha, thanks for the meal. It was very delicious. Then, see you——"

When Coral tried to say that in a hurry, Lux suddenly smiled.

"I'm glad. Then how about we go to the next shop? If you are going to stay here for a while, you will need various other things right?"

"Eh, wai-.....!?"

"That bag was lightly, it doesn't look like there is anything for your everyday life inside it. You will catch cold if you don't prepare properly."

Lux brought Coral to go to a tailor and made him choose a cheap underclothes and sleepwear.

After that they shopped for miscellaneous goods like towel, handkerchief, water bottle in the market and Lux handed them to Coral.

Even so, the places they shopped at were places where Lux once did odd jobs, so they got acquaintance discount.

And then for the last, Lux brought Coral to a clean and safe inn that was relatively cheap. By that time it had already turned night.

"Sorry, somehow I ended up taking you around to various places."

"N, no..... Thanks to you I'm saved from the trouble."

After making small talk with Coral, Lux was going to exit the room.

"Then, take care. If there is anything, I'll go meet you if you go to in front of the Academy so——"

Lux said that with reservation while walking out of the room.

"——Say, Lux-kun."

Lux came to a stop hearing that voice and turned around.

Then, Coral stared at Lux with an expression that was somewhat frustrated.

"That's, as I thought, can I ask you to accompany me in my mission from a while starting from tomorrow? I still don't know much about the terrain and situation outside the Academy.....that's if it won't be a bother to you."

His voice was vaguely mixed with unease.

Lux nodded pleasantly at this young man who was his close acquaintance.

"Yes, gladly. Then tomorrow, I'll meet you after I finished my chores after school."

"Please. Then, take care."

After exchanging words smilingly, the door was closed.

Lux was satisfied that he could be of help to Coral while heading back.

—

## Part 5

"Why did I say something like that.....?"

Inside the inn's room at night.

Coral who was left alone inside the room muttered such thing in a small voice.

He had taken off his woman dress. Now he was looking up to the ceiling while only in his white underwear.

He shouldn't ask for help from Lux.

This secret mission from Vanhaim Principality shouldn't be shared with Lux who was from the new kingdom, in the first place—Coral also had another objective.

And yet why, at that time he called out at Lux to stop?

If he could borrow Lux's help who knew well about Cross Field's situation, he would be able to accomplish his objectives more safely, and Coral would also be able to accomplish the other mission that he received at the same time while acting together with Lux.

Certainly in that sense it wasn't strange for Coral to do what he did. But,

"Even though I only want to do something somehow about the Dragon Marauder, and I didn't intend to follow even that other order too, and yet....."

In the end, did he himself also didn't trust Lux?

No, wrong.

"Does it because I want to know more about Lux-kun?"

He put his hand on his chest to ascertain his own feeling.

On his chest, there were two soft bulges that he said were padding.

It was a mysterious sensation.

Even though the current him was a male, no.

Even though everyone should have been made to recognize him as a male.

"Is there an abnormality occurring in Avalon's mechanism too due to Sacred Eclipse's appearance? If my secret is exposed to Lux-kun right now——"

What would happen?

Perhaps an unavoidable catastrophe would be waiting.

And yet, why did he call out to him by his own initiative?

"Is it because I don't want to become a bad person.....? Or else——"

The answer wouldn't come out even if he talked to himself.

The night of the young man called Coral was passing in only silence.

—



## Part 6

After school the next day, Lux and Coral's strategy began.

Lux who lightly finished the chores after school linked up at the inn with Coral in the appointed time.

Following the eyewitness testimony of Vanheim's royal guard, first they asked around at the residences around the Academy.

From the street stalls, the shops in the main street, and furthermore even the coachmen of the coming and going horse coaches.

Even here Lux's well known personage was useful and they were able to obtain the general information.

It seemed Vine would appear after sunset, and then he would loiter around the Academy from distance doing baffling movement every day.

But, he didn't show any other suspicious movement than that.

Two days had passed since they started gathering information, but they couldn't even catch sight of Vine's shadow.

"Even though he has been staying in Cross Field all this time, but there isn't any sign of him causing anything..... That too feels even more unnatural."

The two snacked on the food they bought at a stall while resting at the central plaza.

Lux had skewered meats with savory sauce.

Coral had a cherry pie.

The food felt excessively delicious because of their empty stomach from walking around.

"Sorry, I wasn't really much help when we looked around."

Lux was wiping the sauce that got stuck on his mouth while saying that. Coral shook his head hurriedly hearing that.

"That's not true. That's, if it's just me alone, I wouldn't be able to do much of anything until now, besides—thanks to Lux-kun, I'm having fun recently."

"Having fun?"

Coral was a bit bashful at Lux's reply.

"Yes. It might be imprudent of me to say this but, I'm having fun. After all, I practically didn't have experience walking around the city with a boy like this."

"How about when you were at Vanheim?"

"Unfortunately, not really. Greifer isn't good with accompanying other, and in the first place, I had been living in a confined world until I became Milmiette-sama's aide. In a situation where I couldn't even really meet my elder sister and little sister, I was merely practicing Drag-Ride in order to carry out the mission of my family."

"Family, mission.....?"

"Lux-kun, do you understand what kind of person are you? From where you came from, and what is it that you should really do——"

"....."

Lux was pondering in respond to what Coral suddenly told him.

The current him was one of the military cadets, and a member of the Seven Dragon Paladins.

He failed in trying to change this country, even so now he chose to get involved with the country's matter as a Drag-Knight.

"I still don't know. Both my elder sister and little sister has decided their answer and acted based on that. I know that I also have to make my decision like them. But——"

Coral looked down in his girl's appearance

Then Lux abruptly smiled and put his hand on Coral's shoulder.

"Feeling lost like that, isn't it fine?"

"Eh.....?"

"I was also the same. Since I was a child, despite being an imperial family member, I was troubled by the way the old empire was—I didn't understand what I should do the whole time. I stifled my feeling then."

Lux smiled with a vaguely pained expression and continued.

"But, I accepted it righty now. This is my destiny. I can feel relieved just by being able to stay together with Lisha-sama and everyone."

".....Is, that so. I'm jealous."

Coral's cheeks loosened hearing Lux's words that were filled with conviction.

And then, he nibbled at the cherry pie on her hand and muttered in a small voice.

"Comrade and friend who would understand myself and listen to my worry..... If I can be together with such people—would I be able to find my answer?"

Seen from the side, Coral's face seemed to look lonely, and also envious somewhere inside.

Lux who saw that unconsciously asked him.

"Say..... I wonder, can we become friend?"

"Eh.....?"

Lux's sudden words made Coral to blink repeatedly.

From Lux's point of view, with his cheeks that were dyed red with his girl's appearance, he looked nothing but completely a girl to him.

"I was unable to make any male friend until now. The other day it felt like that I would be able to make one, but it was no good. That's why, it's, it's fun this time, walking around the city with a boy the same age like me for the first time. It might be me being needlessly meddling but——"

"That's not true. I also think that Lux-kun is a really amazing boy.....  
——friend, I mean."

Lux also stiffened in surprise at Coral's words.

When he kept stopped moving like that for a while, the air became really awkward.

A strange silent atmosphere visited them.

Even so, both of their expression and gesture conveyed their agreement.

"The, then do you want to make.....a contract, that we are friend from now on?"

"Contract.....?"

The words of Coral who broke the silence caused Lux to tilt his head.

".....Yes. If we are friend, let's try what we can? I'll give Lux-kun my pastry, so give me a bite of yours?"

"O, okay....."

Prompted by his words, Lux presented his skewered meats to Coral, while Coral presented his cherry pie.

And then they each took a bite from each other's food, chewed, and gulped it down. After that they shyly looked at each other.

"So, something like this, is what friend do right? It's my first time though——"

"I, I guess. Somehow it feels, really embarrassing....."

He wondered why.

Their exchange just now might be something that often happened between fellow close friends.

But, with Coral dressed as girl, Lux felt a strange feeling.

(Wait, just what am I thinking!? Coral is a boy you know!?)

From his appearance it didn't look like it at all, but he should be a boy.

And yet, his heart was pounding heart as it pleased.

And then, Coral was also showing him a lovely feminine expression.

At that time when the place was wrapped in a perverse atmosphere, something was reflected at the corner of Lux's field of vision.

"——!?"

Lux's expression turned serious. He took Coral's hand and pushed him down on top of the bench.

That sudden action caused the young man before him to raise a shocked voice.

"Wah.....!? Lu, Lux-kun!? Thi, this kind of thing is still too earl——, not that, we are both male....."

"Quiet! He is here as we thought. We aren't seen yet. Let's follow him from now."

".....Don't tell me, it's Vine!?"

Lux nodded at Coral's question that he spoke in a low voice.

Ahead of his gaze, there was a young man with small build wearing a black cloak.

While his face still had a trace of a child in it, his calm presence contained refinement in it somewhere. His appearance matched the information he heard from Coral.

".....Let's follow him carefully. I'm in disguise, so I'll get closer as much as possible. Lux-kun, can you watch out at the back and the surrounding for me?"

"Got it."

The reason of Coral's vigilance must be because of the happening in the campus festival previously.

Six Punishers

At that time Gerdaf, a member of the 'Servants', Heiburg Republic's assassination corps, led Coral into a trap and attempted to kidnap him.

The two now also considered the possibility that Vine himself was a bait that was scattered to lure Lux and Coral.

Lux left the job of shadowing Vine in front of him to Coral while being alert to the back and the surrounding.

Vine was taking a route that was circling the Academy's surrounding, just like the information that they gathered from asking around. At the end he entered into a back alley.

"Lux-kun. That place is——"

"If I remember right, there should be a dilapidated house there but....., don't tell me"

"Is he, preparing Abyss's eggs again.....?"

That possibility existed.

After they found out the place where he was making his preparation like this, perhaps it was better to pull back for the moment.

"Let's get back for now and tell everyone. It will be more certain if we call reinforcement."

"Yes. Lux-kun, you do that. But I cannot let him get away here. I'll catch him right away while he is in sight."

"Coral-!?"

The moment Lux was taken aback, the young man in girl appearance rushed inside the dilapidated house.

There was Vine inside still wearing his cloak while sitting on the bed inside the deserted house.

At the same time Coral quickly pulled out his Sword Device and pointed the tip before Vine's eyes.

"Don't move! I'll stab you if you make even the slightest suspicious movement! Get down on the floor quietly!"

Because there was no space to summon Drag-Ride inside the small closed space, using Sword Device as sword in close quarter combat was better.

Especially at this distance, the sword could slash without giving an opening to summon Drag-Ride. The battle had been decided.

"....."

But, even so Vine didn't look surprised. Far from that, he didn't even make a single twitch.

He only said a word. He directed a blackened dark gaze toward Coral and raised a mad yell.

"—GI, SHAAAAH!"

".....!?"

Coral reacted toward that bizarre action. He quickly kicked on the floor.

He mercilessly launched a thrust in straight line through the shortest route, piercing the enemy's throat—.

But, Dragon Marauder's division commander Vine caught the blade that had pierced its body as though nothing had happened.

At the same time he also pulled out his own Sword Device and slashed the blade toward Coral in return with all his strength.

"Kuh.....!? Damn it!? These guys, they has grasped Ruin's power until this—"

The Sword Device's blade whooshed through air and slashed in an arc.

But, before that attack could land, Vine's arm along with the sword danced in the air.

"Lux-kun.....!?"

The Sword Device's slash that Lux swung cut off Vine's arm and prevented that attack.

But, even after his arm was taken away, Vine didn't falter.

Far from that, he reached out his remaining arm and carelessly constricted Lux's neck.

"This is.....!? As I thought, this guy isn't human."

"Don't touch him-!"

Right after that, Coral's yell struck Lux's ear.

An unfamiliar dark colored blade grew out from the right chest that was at the opposite side of the heart.



"Gu.....a"

Instantly, the eyes of Vine who didn't show any pained reaction until now rolled up and blue froth was spewed out from his mouth.

He was instantly enveloped in light as though his whole body was blazing up, then the body crumbled down and decayed into ash.

"This is—what in the world!?"

After the liberated Lux muttered that, Coral sighed in relieve beside him.

"This thing is a 'Shadow'. A humanoid Abyss that has a function to mimic human. Most likely it's a new type that still hasn't been discovered in many countries. I never thought I will meet one here....."

After that, Lux listened to Coral's explanation and grasped the circumstances of this situation.

Shadow was a special type of Abyss. It was fundamentally a disposable Abyss that didn't have its own ego.

When it was given an order by a horn flute, it wouldn't forget that order and loyally continued to carry out the order until it died.

In exchange of possessing a mimicry ability with high precision, its strength wasn't that different from a human.

Originally it was a pseudo bait that would turn into someone's comrade and then lured them away.

When Vine came to this area, he left behind this Shadow as bait to let him escape. And it seemed Coral and others got caught by it.

"Is, that so."

"For now let's get out of here. Vine should be going to a different place already if he left this thing here. Perhaps he is even at the new kingdom's port city, Triport already."

Following Coral's words, Lux exited the house together with him.

Outside where the weather was late autumn, the sun had already completely set.

—

## Part 7

"Then, thank you for everything until now. You really helped me a lot, and it was fun."

Coral was going to depart from the new kingdom right at that very day. He had taken off his girl disguise while telling Lux his parting words.

Lux faced the young man under the setting sun where darkness was starting to approach.

"Your welcome. Also, I'm thankful to you too, for becoming my friend."

Lux also spoke calmly. Coral showed a frustrated smile at him in respond.

"About that you see. I, have something that I need to apologize to Lux-kun..... My actual mission that made me remained here was——"

"It's not just about the Earth Dragon division commander Vine, but it was also about observing the new kingdom, including me, isn't it?"

"—"

When Lux predicted what he was going to say and said that, Coral opened his eyes wide in surprise and he held his breath.

That proofed that Lux's prediction was correct.

"Since when, did you notice?"

Lux smiled wryly at Coral who asked him with a meek face.

"I thought that it was a bit strange since the beginning, but midway I think that perhaps it's like that. Even though Vine was only looking at the Academy's surrounding from afar, when Coral met me at first, you were peeking until inside the Academy right? Even though you should be able to enter normally in your male appearance if you have business here as the aide of a Seven Dragon Paladins."

In other words, that must be an order from Vanheim Principality.

It didn't seem like it was a command from Princess Milmiette, but most likely Coral received that kind of order.

He was to investigate Vine while he should also be vigilant against the new kingdom too while he was at it. It was that kind of situation.

In fact, the captain of Seven Dragon Paladins, Magialca came to contact Lux and gave him a special mission.

Due to the Lords, a competitive relationships between the country was created in regard to Ruin investigation. Now each country was being alert against each other that perhaps other would steal a march on them.

".....Sorry that I stayed quiet about it. But, when I said that I want to become your friend——"

"I know. Even I, just because I'm a friend, there is still things that I cannot say to Lisha-sama and everyone else. So don't worry about it. Even you Coral also saved me just now right?"

"Lux, kun....."

Coral hung his head down in response to Lux's words.

And then, he shook his body several times as though he was hesitating, then he suddenly made a smile.

"Even though I thought I had paid the debt of that time, now I get indebted to you again."

Coral smiled wryly and quietly approached Lux.

And then, he whispered with a serious voice into Lux's ear.

"——Since some time ago, there is an existence called 'King of Vie' lurking in Heiburg. That person seized the military without showing up at the open until now. It was also that person who instigated the remnants of the old empire and colluded with Hayes. If that person isn't defeated quickly, the

new kingdom will be placed in disadvantage. No, perhaps in even less than one month from now, the new kingdom will be destroyed by him."

"——!?"

"This is an information that I cannot say to anyone that I obtained from a certain source. I also want you to convey this information to your comrades. There is no time. There is also the matter of Sacred Eclipse, but if you are going to run after them, then this is all the more important."

The King of Vice who was committing evil in Heiburg Republic.

An existence that was hiding until now while secretly maneuvering to destroy the new kingdom. Hearing about it, the face one of the Seven Dragon Paladins, Rosa Granhide came into Lux's mind.

If that girl intended to crush the new kingdom in this chance, then Lux had to be the most cautious against her.

".....I'll keep that in mind. Thank you for your warning."

"No need to thank me. More importantly, be careful, if you don't stay alive, I——....."

Coral who was about to say that came to his senses suddenly and shook his head slightly, then he corrected himself.

".....It's nothing. Really thank you for this time. See you again."

He said only that and waved his hand while leaving.

Lux chased after his figure until he was gone from his view, then Lux let out a sigh.

"Did he also notice about my circumstance..... Or else, was it just a coincidence?"

Incidentally, tomorrow Lux would depart to Heiburg Republic. It would be a journey for his extremely secret mission that Magialca assigned to him to identify the traitor's existence.

He had finished all his preparation for that. Did Coral suspected him of that?

"A danger to the new kingdom, is it....."

The Sacred Eclipse that was said that it would destroy the world.

Before that, there was an enemy that he had to fight.

Due to the reward that could be obtained from Avalon and the implication that a traitor existed, a form of competition was created among the countries that heightened the tension.

Was it just like Singlen said, that the Lords were aiming for this?

"I don't understand....."

The answer wouldn't come even if he thought about it.

For today, he could only feel relieved that he managed to make a friend from other country who was worthy of trust and went to sleep early in preparation of tomorrow.

## **Epilogue: The Morning of Departure**

"N, nn....."

The chirping of small bird could be heard. The sunlight was shining in faintly from the curtain's gap.

Last night he thought that it was cold when he slept, but right now his body was warm for some reason.

It seemed that he slept well because of that.

"Fuua, I've got a nice sleep....."

The moment Lux opened his eyelids slightly, white skin entered his eyes.

Two round and large bulges.

He was wrapped in a gentle sweet aroma that was like milk, making him felt like he was melting pleasantly.

"It's warm, and pleasant..... I want to be like this a bit more——.....-!?"

But, the moment Lux noticed what it was, his consciousness was awakened and he leaped from his bed.

"Wait, Phi-chan!? What are you doing here!?"

".....Nn. Morning, Lu-chan. Fuaaaa....."

Philuffy stretched her body slightly with her eyes still closed and she yawned cutely.

Perhaps because it was autumn, she wasn't lightly dressed as expected. She was wearing a cute pajama with warm color, even so the curve of her soft body could be perceived.

Her pure sleeping face that still had vestige of childishness in it, added with her sensual breasts and balanced thigh that were exposed really suggestively stimulated insistently the emotion of Lux who had just woke up.

"Ah, yes. Good morning. ....Not that!? You mustn't make this kind of mistake, Phi-chan. This is my room, what's more sleeping together is no good as expected——"

"We aren't, sleeping together you know?"

Philuffy answered with her usual slow tone.

"Eh.....?"

Lux stared in puzzlement. Seeing him like that, Philuffy continued with an absentminded expression and tone.

"I came to wake up Lu-chan. I was only told by Onee-chan to do that, you know?"

"You weren't doing that at all you know!? Why are you sleeping beside me even though you came to wake me up!? What's more you are still in your pajama!"

"Lu-chan. You just wouldn't wake up, so I also got sleepy. Fuaa....."

Philuffy let out a small yawn with her eyes still closed.

Like always, Philuffy kept going at her own pace no matter what.

Her gesture itself was really cute, but Lux was flustered.

Philuffy's charm from her pajama that shifted and gave a peek of her breasts' valley and her white skin also one reason for him being flustered, but when he saw the time at the clock, he recalled a certain business.

"Tha, that's right Phi-chan! Today I have to leave this Academy already at the afternoon. If I don't hurry——"

"Right, I know. Yesterday, I heard it from master and Onee-chan."

"Eh.....?"

Philuffy said while rubbing her eyes. Her words made Lux looked taken aback.

Why?

The matter this time, the investigation of Heiburg Republic in the end was a special mission from the captain of Seven Dragon Paladins, Magialca. A small part of other students would also be told later, but fundamentally there should be no one who would accompany him.

And yet, why did Philuffy heard about his mission then?



"—My, it's already so heated here since the morning. I wonder if I'm interrupting something?"

"Wait.....!? Relie-san!?"

While Lux was standing in a daze, the room's door suddenly opened and a woman of blooming age appeared.

It was Philuffy's elder sister, the headmaster Relie.

"The preparation has been finished, Lux-kub. From here on you are going to disguise yourself as a young master of Derite Company under Magialca's umbrella and infiltrate Heiburg's capital city."

Infiltrating, gathering information, and locating the proof of the traitor.

Those were Lux's objectives, he heard that it would be an individual mission but—.

"But see, as expected it's worrying to send Lux alone. Besides, Lizsharte-sama and Celis-san has their own important mission..... That's why, I gave Magialca a recommendation. It was about whether it's alright or not for me to prepare a helper for Lux-kun."

"Wai-!? The, then don't tell me——!?"

He got a bad premonition.

The answer that was already transparent surfaced inside Lux's mind.

But, the words that were let out from Relie's smiling face far surpassed his imagination.

"Yes. I want to lend Phi as Lux-kun's guard during your trip. Of course, in order to make it so it doesn't look unnatural that she is accompanying you, you two will be in a setting of a spouses who had just married."

"It will be dangerous!? Even though you understand how dangerous it will be in Heiburg's capital—wait, spouses!?"

Lux only noticed late the meaning of that word.

It wouldn't be just the two of them investigating together, Relie meant that the two of them would each play their own part as husband and wife of a mercantile house.

".....That's how it is. Best regards, Lu-chan."

Philuffy nodded with a small smile at Relie's words.

Right after that, Lux who comprehended the fact yelled.

"—EEEEEEeeeEEH!?"

Five and a half months more until the time limit of world's destruction by Sacred Eclipse that was estimated.

The honeymoon before the marriage of Lux and his childhood friend was starting.

## **Commissioned Short Story – Romance Consultation In Cross Field**

## Part 1

Lux had no male friend the same age with him.

Since his childhood, he also had the circumstance of being in a unique position even within the imperial family of the old empire, and during the five year that he spent as chore prince too, he wasn't really blessed with that kind of chance.

The Seven Dragon Paladins of Vanheim Principality Greifer, and his aide Coral. Lux believed that he had gotten closer too them somewhat.

Even so if it was limited at his nearby within the new kingdom, he didn't have even a single male friend.

Starting from Lisha, the girls in the Academy accepted him really well, but strictly speaking, female friend and male friend were slightly different.

It was a difference that couldn't be done anything about due to the difference in gender.

Thus, at the bottom of his heart, there was no doubt that Lux was slightly holding a yearning for a relationship with male friend whose age was near him —a friend with whom he could act unreserved with.

But, right now Lux was enrolling into an academy for noble girls where he was the only boy there.

Coupled with such special circumstance, something like an encounter with a new male friend was something that couldn't be especially expected, but—.

"Hey prince. Are you still accepting request from man?"

The first block of Cross Field.

In front of the Drag-Ride hangar inside the Academy's ground, a turning point visited Lux at that day.

The one who called out to him was a young man in the same generation with him.

His blonde hair was shaved short pointily and his height was about the same with Lux.

His face that gave the impression innocent childishness fitting for a young man was slightly familiar for Lux.

Huey Reced. Sixteen years old, the second son of a baron house of the new kingdom.

He who introduced himself like that was brimming with jovialness that was fitting for a young man in his springtime.

"Err, if I'm not mistaken—you are the Drag-Ride mechanic's....."

It was an academy for noble daughters, but that didn't mean that there wasn't any male within the ground.

There was quite a number of man working in this facility, although they weren't involved with the students openly.

And then while Lux was doing chores in the Academy, he had seen this young man's figure before.

"Whoops, so you remember me. That's great. That makes this fast! .....Ah, also I'm still an apprentice. Just like you prince who is a military cadet, although our path differ, both of us are fellow apprentice comrades."

The young man who introduced himself as Huey seemed to become in good mood at Lux's reaction.

Saying it negatively, he was acting over familiarly, saying it positively he was acting sociably.

"Just call me Lux. I think you know already, but me being a prince is already a story of the past."

When Lux answered like that with a wry smile, Huey nodded "I get it" with a smile.

The young man took a deep breath as though to sort his feeling for the moment, then he faced Lux once more and spoke with a strong will hidden within his expression.

"—I have a request for you man to man! Teach me how to become populaaarr-!"

".....Yes?"

Lux stiffened for a full several seconds, then he tilted his head awkwardly.

After that, the young man Huey's long story began.

Normally he was only continuing his apprentice work quietly in the Drag-Ride hangar, but for some reason he came into contact with Lux today, the reason for that was,

"You see—to put it simply, the majority of us men who are working in here are ordered that we cannot call out to the ladies except for work matter you know? It's cruel right?"

A few minutes later. Lux was munching on a meat pie that he bought from a stall outside while listening to the story obediently.

Fortunately, if it could be called that, it was after the campus festival, the chores for Lux today was light.

In addition he was also harboring an interest somewhat to have male friends, so he tried to go along with the talk. It seemed that this young man was worried, because among his comrades of the same age, it was only him who couldn't make a girlfriend.

One of the causes was because of the rules in the Academy that he couldn't get involved with the female student.

"But, the rule of the Academy is also correct."

Lux talked to Huey in order to admonish him as lightly as possible.

"Everyone is pretty much young ladies of noble family after all. I think that from their parents and their family, they should have fiancée or marriage interview already at the very least."

Personally, Lux didn't like a marriage that ignored the will of the person involved.

But, by no means that an engagement between fellow noble house would surely link to unhappiness, he understood the circumstance that the custom of noble was that kind of thing.

Surely the parents would be troubled if their important daughter was snatched by unknown man.

Huey sighed at Lux's objective opinion and sent him a gaze that was mixed with resignation.

"—Isn't that right. Even I'm not that childish. I at least know that much. Aah, if only I also have a special circumstance like Lux....."

"Ahaha....."

The young man sulked, but honestly Lux didn't have any word to reply back with.

"However, as expected you are popular in the Academy right? From the rumor, I heard that you kept getting called by the girls."

"Surely that's only because they feel it's novel. Of course I also have a lot of good friends among them though."

"That's why teach me how did you do it! I need a girlfriend! I already said in the gathering with my friends outside the work that I will make a girlfriend within five days!"

"Is, is that so.....!?"

Five days was too reckless.

It seemed that this young man called Huey had personality that stressed spur of the moment.

Although Lux couldn't say anything about other people regarding the aspect of taking action without thinking ahead.

"But, it's not like I'm doing something by thinking of wanting to get popular....."

"Kuaaa..... So you are unintentionally popular with your natural self!? This is why a prince is just....."

Huey held his head and groaned seeing Lux's conflicted smile.

"Haa..... There is no way a mere Drag-Ride mechanic can do that. Even though it's a rare chance with a garden of ladies right in front of me, I'm just doing work with stuffy old men the whole day inside the hangar smelling like oil."

Before long Huey's head dropped down in dejection and he let out a great sigh.

"You too originally should become Drag-Ride mechanic apprentice right? Where did I mistake my path I wonder....."

Huey felt silent with that. Lux was troubled.

"Your path isn't mistaken or anything. I too was just coming across everyone by chance. I didn't do anything big. Huey too, you might be able to have thing go well if you get a chance to meet with a girl you know?"

"Do you think so? Can I also make a girlfriend? If only I can have an encounter—then even a frivolous person like me"

Huey lifted up his face in a flash from Lux's advice and he asked back with a serious expression.

"Yeah, surely it will be fine. Well, it might be impossible right away, but I think if you can talk with several girls, then surely you will find a girl who is

a good fit with you——"

"Thanks Lux. For trusting me like that....., you are a far better guy than my friends from when I was still a brat."

Huey put his hand on Lux's shoulder while tear was gathering at the corner of his eye.

(I'm glad, perhaps with this he will be fine for now.....)

Lux felt relieved in his heart like that, but then,

"——I got it! Then Lux. If you are going to say that much, can I ask you to do one thing for me?"

"Eh.....?"

Lux got a bad premonition seeing Huey who was still looking down.

It smell like when he was accepting a dangerous request.

This was the instinct of Lux who had received hundreds of request until now.

"In short, I cannot talk with the ladies from my end, but the order doesn't forbid about the talking itself. That's even if it's an apprentice mechanic like me."

Huey's eyes glittered fiercely with light of desire.

Lux's premonition changed into conviction.

This flow was one where the talk would definitely be at troublesome one.

"Today is a holiday and there is no class. Perhaps some of the ladies too will deign to talk with me. If it's with the introduction of none other than you——"

"Eeeeeeeh.....!?"

The young man grabbed Lux's shoulders and pleaded with a wordless smile.



Thus this turmoil began.

—

## Part 2

"Please I'm begging you save this pitiful me if it's you who is always surrounded by girls then if you are troubled then as a mechanic I will always listen to your trouble anytime and if it's trouble for man then I'll listen to anything for example see——"

Lux didn't remember the whole conversation, but Lux yielded against Huey's desperation.

Lux promised that he would do what he could to introduce the Academy's girl to Huey.

But, at the same time he also prepared several minimum agreements.

He mustn't approach the girl too persistently and if the girl refused to talk with him then he would obediently back down.

And also they would finish today with just calling out to several girls.

"Of course I'll keep the promise. Trust me!"

Huey readily accepted the conditions, but Lux was still a bit uneasy.

Well, it seemed that he single mindedly wanted to first become acquaintance with girls, so surely he wouldn't do something too strange. ....Perhaps.

"Then, you don't mind whichever girl it is to talk with?"

"Yeah, I don't mind. —No, wait a second. By the way Lux, you have been in the Academy for half a year already, so you must be quite knowledgeable about the situation right?"

"Err....., well, somewhat."

At the very least, compared to this young man who had only ever come and go from the Drag-Ride hangar, Lux should be more informed about the situation with certainty.

Thinking so, Lux replied affirmatively, at that moment,

"—And, speaking honestly, who are you going out with?"

Huey suddenly dropped his voice's tone and whispered teasingly.

Lux suddenly went red from the unexpected surprise question.

"I, I'm not going out with anyone you know!? What are you saying!?"

"What, don't worry, I won't tell anyone else. It's a promise between men."

"Tha, that's not it, I really don't have it, so, something like girlfriend—"

".....You serious? Don't tell me"

"Yeah....."

Huey was staring at Lux's face really dubiously but,

".....Unbelievable, but, unexpectedly that might be the case huh. After all there is also the atmosphere of the Academy to be considered."

Before long he nodded in understanding.

"However, well, that's the best in a sense. Then first, let's try aiming from the top!"

The young man whose smile was filled with expectation whispered into Lux's ear.

A few minutes later. The first plan to search for Huey's lover candidate opened its curtain.

—

## Part 3

"—Then, what? You came not to meet me, but only to show me the face of this strange man?"

Lisha who was wearing a white robe was folding her arms with a displeased expression.

'I want to meet the new kingdom's princess! I heard that her skill as Drag-Knight is amazing, it isn't strange that I want to look at her from nearby right!?'

In order to grant the wish of such Huey, Lux guided him to the Drag-Ride atelier to introduce him to Lisha, but,

"Haa..... It feels like I'm wasting my time here. Because you expressly said that you want to come to the atelier, I even hurriedly cleaned up, and yet it's like this. Just what's the point of this effort?"

It seemed that from Lisha's point of view, her first impression of this young man wasn't really good.

Lux felt somewhat responsible, but perhaps this was only natural when he brought up this talk so suddenly.

On the other hand, Huey was losing his nerve somewhat, even so he stepped forward courageously.

"I've heard the rumor but, I'm surprised..... Even though your highness is the princess, but you are a Drag-Knight and even able to develop Drag-Ride—I'm really in admiration."

"I, I see. Well, naturally. After all I'm quite amazing even though I look like this."

Lisha was nodding in satisfaction at Huey's praise, and yet for some reason she sent a sidelong glance at Lux.

".....?"

While Lux was tilting his head at that gesture, Huey seemed to see some prospect for himself and continued further.

"I cannot wear Drag-Ride myself, but as Drag-Ride mechanic, I should be more useful than Lux, so please feel free to call me anytime. If you like then even now——"

"——Hou? Are you that knowledgeable about Drag-Ride? More than Lux?"

But, Lisha whose expression was cherubic until now smiled daringly with that sentence.

It was the other face that Lisha possessed, the dangerous and belligerent look that Lux saw when he first met her.

Lux didn't really understand, but it seemed she was offended by something.

"Eh, no. I, I think that perhaps it's so but....."

"——Then try to answer. How much is the maximum loading capacity of the three kinds of general purpose Drag-Ride? The number of weapon that can be used simultaneously depending on the tuning? What parts can be repaired by exchanging it? Even if you are just an apprentice mechanic, you should at least know that much right?"

"Uh.....!?"

The young man was petrified by the sudden torrent of questions.

A mechanic apprentice wasn't a match for Lisha who was able to even develop Drag-Ride by herself.

After that, unable to answer all the questions that were more than ten in total, Huey fell silent looking like his soul was coming out from his body.

"Fuh, this is out of the question. As I thought, Lux alone is enough as my assistance."

Being told that by Lisha who was puffing up her chest dignifiedly, Huey left the atelier tottering.

"The hell, so it's not just the princess's pastime!? Ain't she more knowledgeable in Drag-Ride than my own boss!?"

"Don't take it to heart too much, Lisha-sama is special after all."

"Yeah, thanks—wait, this guy too, he ain't noticing anything at all just now....."

The young man said his thanks to Lux's consolation even while saying incomprehensible thing.

"Then, what about the next one? Is there other girl you want to try to talk with—"

"There is! Just now I was only giving it a try because there is nothing to lose! In a sense the next one if the main event!"

Lux smiled wryly at the quickness of Huey's recovery, and then he was told about the young man's next wish.

And then, in order to head to the place of the girl in question, they began to walk in a hurry.

—

## Part 4

"Surely you also know about her, the beautiful girl that is like a fairy! She is an overseas student from a foreign country, but it seems that her grades in studying and also Drag-Ride are perfect——"

Lux immediately got an idea about who was the girl from Huey's explanation.

At the same time he got a bit of bad premonition.

He had no doubt that one of his classmates, Krulcifer was an extremely charming girl.

But, she was sensitive to ulterior motive. Somehow Lux believed that someone like Huey wouldn't be her type.

(Though this is Krulcifer-san, so surely she won't be saying anything too painful.)

Depending on Huey's attitude, he might get rejected in a dangerous way.

So that wouldn't happen, he had to mediate between the two sides skillfully.

Lux was thinking like that with consideration as a friend of the two, but,

"I'm Krulcifer, a daughter from a house of count at Ymir Theocracy. Normally we don't really have any common point between us but, best regard."

Krulcifer smoothly brushed up her hair and smiled while saying that.

The friendly greeting that was completely different from the previous case seemed to cause Huey to be drastically more enthusiastic.

"UOOOOOOH! As expected seeing her from close up she is three.....no, five times more beautiful! Thanks so much, Lux. This is thanks to you!"

"No, this is only still a greeting though....."

Even while smiling wryly, Lux didn't feel so bad about being relied on.

Krulcifer was casually comparing the face of Lux and Huey who were like that while standing with a graceful bearing.

"The, then, this might sound sudden but, will you go ou.....no, will you be my friend!? If you can just talk with me when you have a bit of free time——"

"Unfortunately, I won't be able to do that."

Huey's face was heavily clouded with how she cut him down resolutely.

"Can you please not misunderstand? It's not like I'm disliking to get involved with you."

Krulcifer calmly began with that, then she smiled.

Her expression looked vaguely apologetic, making anyone who saw it would want to forgive her about anything.

"Actually——due to the instruction from Einfeld house, while I'm still a student I must not speak too much with any specific male. Most likely they are telling me to do that in consideration of any marriage interview talk. Lux-kun is an exception, but even for him it needed time until my family accepted it."

"I, is that so....."

'Eh.....?' Lux was tilting his head inside his heart.

Judging from the story that he had heard from her until now, and from his experience where he had even visited Einfeld house, there shouldn't be any rule like that imposed on her, but.....

He was prevented to speak out such doubt by Krulcifer's gaze.

"It's unfortunate that I cannot get to know you better, but it will be great if you can get along with Lux-kun from here on too. After all, it seems like you



are a good person."

"Ye, yes-! I will do my best!"

After that Huey talked a bit more with Krulcifer and he gave up.

In reality, it looked like he was simply getting rejected politely, even so his cheeks loosened in a satisfied smile.

"Er, Krulcifer-san?"

Huey left his seat earlier, so Lux called out to her like that.

"—And so, I don't really understand the situation but, it's fine to end it like this right? Lux-kun will also listen to my request next time in exchange of this right?"

"You didn't just skillfully reject him, but you even make me to be in your debt-!?"

She used the instruction (lie) from her house to dress it as though she had no choice but to reject the young man, furthermore she even propped up Lux's standing. Such feat was just as expected from Krulcifer.

"Well, this is Lux-kun we are talking about, so surely you were unable to refuse that person's request. But it will be better if you are a bit more careful you know? After all it's possible that you will get dragged into some kind of trouble due to someone's request."

"A,ahaha....."

Lux followed after Huey while Krulcifer who guessed everything acted considerately to him.

—

## Part 5

"Krulcifer-san is really pretty. It was really unfortunate....., well, there is also Lux, so it can't be helped huh."

Huey was sighing in disappointment while moving through the courtyard.

Lux who was walking beside him made a wondering face hearing that.

"What do you mean? What's wrong with me being there——"

"You didn't notice!? Really, someone like you are just....., just how did you persuade her to interact with you even despite the order from her house huh?"

By the way, the order from the house was Krulcifer's excuse.

And so, Lux chose his words carefully so that he wouldn't expose that.

"Since I enrolled into the same Academy like her, it couldn't be helped because of that I think?"

"Kuaa!? I don't get iiiittt! What a blessed bastard, unforgivableee! Well fine, like this thanks to you I can ask you to let me talk to them after all. Then next!"

"There is still more!? As expected there is also the time to consider, even if we do it at another day——"

"No, I found it already! It's that girl!"

The young man pointed with a snap and his gaze moved to the corner of the courtyard.

There was the figure of a girl student there sitting on a wooden bench while eating donut.

Her pink hair and absentmindedly expressionless face were the characteristic trait of this lovely girl.

She was a childhood friend that was really close with Lux, Philuffy Aingram.

Was there some fate at work that all the girls until now were those who were close with Lux?

"That, soft atmosphere of a noble young lady. Those huge and full breasts. That innocent face with trace of childishness in it. Aa—it's the best! Won't she become my girlfriend immediately.....!"

"I guess. Wait, first it's starting from friendship right?"

"A, aah.....bu, but of course! I unconsciously got ahead of myself there!"

Huey's tone changed agreeably after Lux pointed that out.

When Lux was about to call out to Philuffy even while feeling slightly exasperated, Huey was already running toward her.

"Wait, you are already running wild there!"

"—Heey, the girl over there. How about talking for a bit with me if you have time?"

He sat beside Philuffy and talked intimately to her.

He was like that even though he already failed twice. There was something that could be learned from his positivity.

"....."

But, the crucial person herself, Philuffy was staying silent. She was staring to the front with an absentminded gaze.

"Munch munch....., good afternoon. Lu-chan too."

A full few seconds after Huey called out to her, Philuffy finally turned her face and replied.

"Ah, Phi-chan. This person is a Drag-Ride mechanic apprentice who is working in the Academy—"

"Uh huh."

Her attitude that was too simple and curt caused Huey's face to twitch slightly.

But, even so he pulled himself together and talked to her with a smile once more.

"To, today's weather is nice isn't it?"

".....Maybe."

"Err, what did you eat just now? Could it be a sweets that is sold in the Academy too?"

"Donut, and cookie, and cherry pie, and rusk. Also, what.....?"

The tempo of the conversation was strangely out of sync.

Philuffy's tempo that was on her own pace and her expressionless look caused Huey to look perplexed.

It would be bad at this rate.

Thinking that, the young man turned around in panic and looked for help.

He dropped his voice's tone until the limit and whispered into Lux's ear.

"Say, the conversation won't progress, could it be I'm hated?"

"It's not that, it's because Phi-can is always like this. You don't need to be that bothered about it."

Huey became teary eyed from his anxiety. Lux consoled him while talking to Philuffy in his place.

"Phi-chan, has anything strange happened recently?"

".....I trained a bit. Because, I want to protect Lu-chan from master."

Her saying that must be because of the captain of Seven Dragon Paladins, and also Philuffy's master in martial art—Magialca.

Because she was trying to invite Lux to become her lover, Philuffy said that.

"A,ahaha....."

Lux could only laugh wryly, but for some reason Huey who didn't know anything about the circumstance reacted toward that conversation.

"Wait, what. So Lux is getting protected by a girl? What a troubling guy. You need to train yourself a bit more like that."

"Err..... I, guess."

The sudden words from the young man caused Lux to throw the appropriate words in bewilderment.

Right after that, Huey asked Lux if he wanted to try doing arm wrestling with him, then next he whispered to Lux's ear.

"Please Lux, I don't know how strong you are but please lose! I want to show my good side in front of her!"

Hearing that, Lux finally noticed his intention.

Honestly he felt doubtful that Huey would be able to get Philuffy's admiration by doing that.

But, he yielded against Huey's desperation and he agreed to do arm wrestling, then he lost just as planned.

"Ouch ouch....., Huey is really strong."

"Yeah, even like this I'm better trained than you after all."

"....."

Philuffy was staring unblinkingly at Huey who was smiling triumphantly.

The young man mistook it as a gaze of admiration from her and talked even further.

"Well, I'll also train the inexperienced Lux later. As expected it's no good if a man is being protected by a girl. If you like I can take time to train—. Hm.....?"

\*Poke poke\* Philuffy poked at Huey's shoulder from the side.

And then she put her elbow on the nearby stand and turned an absentminded gaze toward the young man.

".....Next. Have a match, with me."

"Oops, so you finally talk to me too. But, well, don't worry. I'll hold back so to not hurt Philuffy-chan so—wait, ugagagagaoaAAAH!"

Before he could finish talking, Philuffy's arm instantly brought down Huey's arm.

An impact burst as though she was going to smash the wooden stand. The young man writhed in pain and rolled around on the grass lawn.

"Aaa....."

Lux pressed his face and regretted his inability to stop this from happening.

He had already imagined somehow that it would become like this though.

"Revenge for Lu-chan. ....I have taken revenge but, sorry. It would be better if I held back a bit more."

Because Philuffy was made to miscalculate about the young man's arm strength after he won against the half-hearted Lux, this tragedy occurred.

Due to Abyss's influence, although her appearance was lender, Philuffy possessed arm strength that was multiple times of normal human.

Lux brought him straight to the medical office after that. Fortunately there was no abnormality with his bone.

"WHYYyYYY!? Is my strength so weak that I lost to a girl.....!"

When Lux was worrying about how to console Huey who was grieving, a female student suddenly passed through the corridor outside the medical office.

The one who was walking with her beautiful blond hair fluttering was a third year and a daughter of a duke, the strongest in the Academy, Celistia Ralgris.

She had incomparable strength as a Drag-Knight and a lovely beautiful face.

And then above all else, because of the rumor of her being a 'man-hater', she was an existence that even noblemen couldn't carelessly make a move on, but,

"Yo, you are Celis-senpai!? Nice to meet you! I am an apprentice mechanic called Huey!"

The young man who heard from Lux that the 'man-hater' rumor was a misunderstanding did his best to raise a bright voice.

He walked in front of Celis and sent her the smile of an agreeable young man.

"Ni, nice to meet you. Lux, what's with this boy——?"

"Eerr....."

Lux smiled wryly while telling her that the young man was an apprentice mechanic in the hangar and his acquaintance.

Then it seemed Celis guessed the circumstance. She smiled gently even with her bewildered feeling.

"Is, that so. A male friend of Lux is it....."

"No, that's still, we have only known each other just now though."

"By the way senpai, it seems you are a man-hater in the rumor, but actually that's not true right!? Then how about getting along with me as the second

man after Lux——"

"Ple, please don't get so close! That's not permitted! I, I have a business after this so——"

Celis who was approached by Huey glared at him with an intense gaze, then she escaped with a red face.

Her back vanished from view in the blink of eye. A few seconds later, the young man raised a distressed yell.

"WHYYYYYYY-! ISN'T SHE A MAN-HATER JUST AS RUMOREEEEEEDD-!"

Later Lux would ask Celis about it, and she said 'I was surprised that a boy suddenly approached. Haa, it was a blunder. I thought that thanks to Lux I have become a bit used to male but.....'

She regretted it like that.

Perhaps it was just as expected, she was a clumsy senpai as usual.

And then, speaking of Huey right now,

"DAMN ITTTTTT! AM I NO GOOOOOoDDDD!? ——Or rather, actually how many girls you are close with huh!? Aren't you close with almost all the cute girls!?"

"Even if you said that to me....."

"You aren't going to say that they are just friends right? Those four's reaction toward you are obviously not the attitude of mere close friend after all."

"I, is that so?"

He didn't think of it until that far until he was told like that, but seen from outside did it look like that?

He had quite the self-confidence from the chores livelihood, but now he became self-aware that it was quite difficult to listen to the trouble of a male



friend.

"There is one more girl. I don't know her name but.....she is a student who enrolled from foreign country, and she is also an amazingly beautiful girl. There is such a rumor but, as expected you don't know her right?"

"That's, could it be, Yoru——"

The moment Lux recalled the figure of a certain girl after hearing that description, a voice came into Lux's ear.

"——Do you have a business with me, Aruji-sama?"

A sweet breath tickled his earlobe, and the finger that was caressing his spine made him shivered.

A girl wearing black clothes of foreign country with high exposure rate was standing behind him.

"-.....!? Wait, Yoruka!? Why are you here——"

"My? Aruji-sama is asking something strange. I am always by Aruji-sama's side. Especially now in this situation where Aruji-sama's person has to be protected no matter what——"

"E, even that girl is your acquaintance!? Furthermore she is somehow acting really intimate with you!?"

Huey was flustered seeing Yoruka's gesture that was entangling her limbs toward Lux.

When Lux was hesitating about how to explain this,

"It's inaccurate to call me something like acquaintance. I am Aruji-sama's loyal servant. I devoted both my body and heart for Aruji-sama's sake. That is our relationship. I cannot feel any hostility from you, but if you do anything strange then I will cut you down, so please bear that in mind."

"Ye, yeeess-.....!"

Against Yoruka who was threatening instead of merely introducing herself, Huey was shaking intensely and fell on his knees there.

"Then, please have a good rest, Aruji-sama."

Yoruka left with a cheerful smile that contained no malice.

"Holy cow. A girl that cute is your follower? Shit, surely she even gave you erotic service in the girl dormitory....."

"That's not really mistaken but it's a misunderstanding you know!?"

Lux retorted right away while waiting for Huey to get back up, but it seemed that the five consecutive failures until now had an effect. He finally ran out of strength and made a face like a wilted flower.

"Haa. In the end all the girls that caught my attention are nothing but girls who like you huh..... Is a simple mechanic apprentice like me has no chance at all to win against a former prince like you from the start....."

"No, I don't think that's true though."

Lux told the young man that seriously.

"Even I was unable to have understanding with Lisha-sama and Celis-senpai when we first met, I think this is only a problem of familiarity. Huey is bright and optimistic, if you only have the chance, then the possibility of you being able to get along with them from here on is——"

"Lux.....a guy like you, for the sake of someone like me"

Huey was moved into tear from Lux's encouragement.

"As I thought what someone should have is a male friend——thanks."

"Ahaha, you are exaggerating. Let us both do our best together."

Lux and Huey smiled to each other and exchanged a handshake.

Like that Huey stood up, and right after that a female student arrived from the side.

A small statured girl with silver hair and grey pupils like Lux.

The girl with calm and graceful bearing was Lux's little sister, Airi Arcadia.

".....What are you doing Nii-san? Holding hand with other male like that"

Airi muttered that while holding a book at her side and staring fixedly at the two.

"Ah, Airi. This is——"

When Lux was going to explain himself in panic, Huey was moving.

"You are.....!? What a beautiful girl!"

Huey leaped up in a flash as though he was set on fire and grabbed Airi's hands.

He faced Airi who was blinking in bewilderment and pressed on further with his momentum.

"Ah, forgive me for taking your hands so suddenly. Eerr, I am your big brother's friend, Huey. It will make me happy if you can get along slightly with me as my friend's little sister, specifically we can get out a bit right now while talking to each other leisurely——"

".....Oops, stop right there. Let your hand go from the girl."

The one who appeared with her hand laid on the sheath of her Sword Device, was Sharis of Triad.

"Yes yees. One customer coming right u~p. The destination is specifically to the headmaster office."

"Yes. Because originally a Drag-Ride mechanic like you is not someone that is allowed to enter until this area."

Tillfur spoke with a bright tone while Noct informed with her usual matter-of-fact tone.

The famous trio who imitated a vigilance group in the Academy—the Triad.

It was a bit bad for the young man to catch their attention.

"No, that's, there is a bit of circumstance about this——"

Lux immediately tried to cover for Huey, but Sharis shook her head slightly.

"We were simply observing in deference to you, but as expected we cannot overlook him touching a student from his own end. Well, we don't intend to make this that big of a case. We will only give him a bit of scolding, Academy style, and make him write a written apology."

"Ple, please have mercy.....!"

The easily carried away young man released Airi's hand and apologized earnestly. Airi briskly walked toward him with a serious face.

For a moment, the little sister showed a gentle expression, looking as though she was going to give a timely help, and she whispered.

"It seems that you want to get a lover from among the girls in Academy but—I too have no interest in male other than Nii-san, so please give up."

"SO EVEN THE LITTLE SISTER DOESN'T ESCAPE FROM HIS CLAW HUHHHH!? WHAT THE HELL IS WITH THIS MAaAAaANN!"

The instant death attack that was unleashed from the innocent smile caused Huey to ran away while scattering tears.

But, he was quickly captured by the Triad and got taken away immediately to the headmaster office.

".....Say, Airi."

When Lux asked after there were only the two of them left, Airi sighed with an exasperated face.

"That's obviously a lie. I was only cleaning up after Nii-san. Please be thankful to me okay?"

"Err, then you noticed Huey's aim?"

He wanted to get a lover of the Academy's female student.

Lux introduced him to the students to make friend with that as the premise.

"It's only Nii-san who won't notice that kind of obvious ulterior motive. Most likely that person thought that if it's me who is Nii-san's little sister, I won't be Nii-san's target for romance, so he thought that it was his chance. But, I have no interest at all with that type of person."

In other words, she said that lie after seeing through everything.

Lux was shuddering from the lack of opening in his little sister while feeling half dumbfounded.

However——this time Lux himself might be leaning too much on Huey's point of view.

He was unable to think ahead about what the girls of the Academy would think.

He had to reflect on that point.

"Though, it wasn't like, I was lying completely though——"

".....Eh? What did you say?"

When Lux reacted at what she murmured in a small voice, the little sister shook her head in panic.

"I, it's nothing! It's not Nii-san's business!"

Like that this event that happened suddenly closed its curtain and they returned to their usual ordinary day.

It was a digression but, when Lux met Huey by accident the next day and he tried to console him,

'THIS CLUELESS POPULAR LADY KILLER BASTAAAaAAAARD-!'

He yelled like that teary eyed the moment he saw Lux.

Perhaps it would still be far in the future until Lux was able to make a male friend of the same age in Cross Field.

## Afterword

Many thanks.

For those who have been picking up this series since a long time ago, thank you for every time.

To those who became curious from the anime and read until catching up to this volume, hello.

Thank you very much for picking up this work.

This is Akatsuki Senri who is seeing hell in this half year due to the hard schedule.

—

Now then, this time it's Bahamut's first short story collection but, what do you all think?

In the main story, there is the characteristic of the great number of heroines including the sub characters, but I don't know if it was still at the first three

volumes, but since the fifth volume ahead, the number of enemy and ally characters kept increasing, and with the number of pages getting consumed by the story progression, the scenes of the usual ordinary days tended to get shaved no matter what. That is the worry in my mind recently.

Amidst that, this time I wrote short story collections for each character for the first time. I was able to write the feeling of each heroine and their involvement with Lux leisurely that normally I wouldn't be able to do, so personally I'm really happy.

'The turn for my favorite character is few!' If the readers who usually lamented like that can enjoy this then it will be great though.....!

This series too finally has rushed into the turning point, so I wish to work even harder to be able to satisfy both for the readers who has followed this series since the beginning and also the readers who picked up this series since the anime (dying).

—

Then for the thanks.

Kasuga Ayumu-sama who is responsible for this series illustrations.

This time through the hard schedule of one month, three months, you had drawn many illustrations that I had been looking forward since the time of the short story publication, thank you very much.

To be able to see a lot of the Triad characters who normally won't be able to be main focus in the illustration, it's the best.

And then, for all the readers who read this series until the last.

Please support Bahamut from here on too along with the anime that is currently in the middle of broadcast and also the comic version.

—

A certain day in February 2016 Akatsuki Senri